

Richard Daunt Reilly
M A D M A N

OF

THE MOUNTAIN.

A TALE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

BY HENRY SUMMERSETT,

AUTHOR OF PROBABLE INCIDENTS, &c.

“ Whither are fled the charms of vernal grace,
“ And joy’s wild gleams that lighten’d o’er thy face ?
“ Youth of tumultuous soul, and haggard eye !
“ Thy wasted form, thy hurried steps I view :
“ On thy cold forehead starts the anguish’d dew,
“ And dreadful was that bosom-rending sigh !”

COLERIDGE’S MONODY.

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THE
Mad Man of the Mountain.

CHAP. I.

MY good and generous friend Alberti had been dangerously wounded by some villains in the streets of Venice, to whom he resolutely refused to give up his money; and his hurts were of such a nature, that it was conjectured death would be the consequence of them. Apprized of his injury, I hastened to him, in order that I might perform the offices of friendship; and, indeed, I found that his piteous situation

entitled him to the softest of them, for he had several contusions on his head; and after he had been rescued, part of a broken filetto was found in his back; his loss of blood had been great, and a fever succeeding, his intellects were deranged, and he knew no one who came near to him.

My pain on seeing him in this state, was excessive; and when I returned home, and spoke of him to Rosolie, she neither could, nor attempted to restrain her tears: we both feared the loss of a most excellent friend and good man, and both execrated the unknown monsters who had so cruelly and privately assaulted him. I attended several days on the unconscious Alberti, returning to Rosolie every evening; but as he grew considerably worse, and it was suggested by the physicians that nature was rapidly



rapidly failing, I resolved to pass a night with him, thinking that, ere the morning, he would be totally overpowered by death.

Rosolie was somewhat indisposed, but she wished me to be with Alberti, and afterwards, seeing me reluctant on account of her illness, entreated me to go. I kissed her, and calling Lucilla, her maid, cautioned her to take care of her mistress till my return. I then went back again to Venice, and placed myself near the bed of Alberti; nor did I quit my station till the morning, when, to my infinite surprise and joy, the doctors informed me that the fever had very considerably abated, and that there was a probability of the recovery of their patient.

“Then I am happy!” I exclaimed; “I will return to my Rosolie, and inform her of this favourable change. I am sure it will make her joyful; the preservation of

so excellent a friend will call forth her gratitude to Heaven."

I felt the pulsations of my heart, which had long been languid, almost instantly increase in their force and activity, and ardently pressed the hands of those who nurtured the hopes which had before been famishing. It was with the greatest speed, and with most sincere pleasure, that I pursued my way towards my habitation. The morning was clear and lovely, like my imagination, which now burst through the vapours that had been collecting around it; the air was enriched by the contributions of flowers and herbs, and I looked into two or three of Rosalie's favourite haunts, in the fond expectation of finding her.

A small group of trees only was now between me and my love, and I peeped through their branches in order to gain a sight of her

her dwelling. A man, who was known to me, met me on the road ;—I had ever judged by his face that he was one of the happiest of mortals ; but now the grief that hung on his countenance, and the horrid manner in which he looked at me, made me on the instant withdraw my opinion. He crossed me in my path, and grasped my arm. “ Have you not seen,” he cried, “ have you not seen——”

“ What ?” I enquired with astonishment.

“ Have you not heard of your——”

“ Of what ?”

“ Of your house, Signor ?”

“ No !”

“ Of your wife ?”

“ Mercy ! no, no, no !”

“ Not that she is——”

“ Dead ! speak, speak ! dead !”

“Go not forward, Signor,” he cried, grasping me at the same time with increased strength, “go not forward!”

“Let me go on!” I exclaimed, almost frenzied; “take your hands from me instantly!”

“Signor, listen to me; proceed no further; the fight will kill you!”

“Sight! God! what fight? Offer to detain me another minute, and the balls that are in this pistol shall be lodged in your head!”

I produced the instrument, and levelling it at him, he crossed the road, when, turning the angle of the grove, I strained my eyes in looking for my habitation, but saw only some blackened ruins: for a moment I shut out the fight. Rousing myself, however, from the lethargy into which I was falling, I ran among the people who were gathered
together

together. "Who perished in the flames?" I cried frantically.

"All who resided in the house," was the answer; "none escaped."

"None escaped?" I said, "none escaped?"

"None, Signor, none."

"None escaped!"

I fell on the earth, and becoming insensible, was for a considerable time unconscious of my miseries and misfortunes."

My senses afterwards returned; I broke from those who strove to detain me, and ran wildly round the ruined fabric, calling on my wife, my Rosalie! But I was not answered; she had perished—had been devoured by the flames! and not a limb or bone of either her or of the two servants could be discovered among the ashes! My brain seemed to be incruited; I had not power to move my eyes, and my veins felt

as if they were icicles. When the spectators first opposed me, my strength was lion-like; but my nerves soon relaxed, and a child might have brought me to the ground. This feebleness also extended to my mind: I was now to be guided, and was unresistingly led away.

* * * * *

I am convinced that insanity has its blessings; for, during the whole of the month that succeeded the conflagration, I was never more happy; but of the nature of my ideas, of their strength, or of their weakness, I cannot now speak. Reason afterwards gradually approached; I wished not, however, for its return; and in order to destroy the growing stability of my mind, I exerted myself as much as possible, and whirled myself round repeatedly, thinking
by

by such means to make my brain eternally giddy.

I was in one of these half-frenzied moods when my hospitable host (the man who had compassionately borne me from my ruined abode, and since sheltered and protected me) entered the room in which I was;—not regarding him, I continued my extravagant practice till I almost petrified him with fear, and till I fell on the floor, which I stained with my blood; my temples being torn by a nail that projected from a wall, against which I staggered, and the stream that flowed in consequence of it was copious.

“Mother of Christ!” exclaimed Paulo;
“do you yet live, Signor?”

I heard his voice, knew perfectly well what he said, and starting on my feet, ran towards him, in order to assure him that I was not only in being, but also sensible of

the objects around me; he, however, hurried away from me, pointing at the same time to the door, near to which stood a man almost as lean and pale as death.

“Roncorone!” said the phantom-like figure, “poor, poor Roncorone!”

These were the accents of Alberti, and I knew them to be such. I extended my arms, and ran upon him. In my paroxysms I hugged him with an almost suffocating strain; and the blood that trickled from my wound stained his ashy cheeks, while my tears fell into his bosom, and his eyes were as prodigal as mine.

“To meet thus,” said Alberti——”

“Is happiness!” I cried. “Come to my heart, friend; it is cold, but your friendship will warm it. Here is my hand; take it as the pledge of a brother’s love. We parted in joy——”

“ Oh, no, Roncorone !”

“ Yes, yes, Alberti, we parted in joy, and in joy we again meet : by these throbings and internal emotions we do !—and yet, I think our countenances and bodies ought to be, in some degree, actuated by our souls. Why, your cheeks are dreadfully fallow, and your eyes glare on me so strangely, that they look like fragments of the mirror of death !”

“ Friend, I have suffered !”

“ Aye, and *I* have suffered. Sit—I’ll tell you how.”

“ Forbear, forbear, Roncorone !”

“ Sit, listen. Do you not remember that I had a wife ? You cannot have forgotten what a kind angel God formed in Heaven for me ; she loved you as my friend. You must recollect how beautiful she used to smile upon us when we

approached her, and what music came from her tongue when she addressed herself to us. Well, Signor—nay, nay, sit patiently. It is said that no event happens on earth but what is under the immediate direction of Heaven ; my wife, Alberti, while you were suffering in your misfortune, was burnt—her lily flesh incruited to a cinder, or converted into ashes ! Not a vestige of those arms, which have so often enfolded me, was to be found ; and those breasts on which I nightly pillowed my head—on which—God ! God ! why am I left to be the narrator of this tale ? Alberti, do you now wonder at these tears ? Do you wonder that my wretched bosom swells with sighs, or that I wish to lay down my miserable life, and to step beyond what is now before me ?”

“ Be calm, my dear friend !” said Alberti, pressing me again to his breast.

“ Oh,

“ Oh, my wife ! my wife ! ”

“ She is happy, Roncorone. ”

“ And I shall soon be happy with her ! ” I exclaimed. “ Alberti, whenever you pass by my grave, whether at morning, noon, or night, let the tears of friendship and of compassion fall upon the sod that covers me. ”

“ May you yet continue many years, ” said Alberti, “ before such a proof of sympathy be required of me ! ”

“ Oh ! we are all sorry pilgrims, Alberti, and I of all the most sorry. The prospect of life appears to me as a damp and mouldy picture ; the once pleasing objects of which no longer retain their colour, grace, or proportion. My eyes are disgusted ; many times do I close them, and wish never to open them more ; and when, after successive days of weariness and despair, I lay down
my

my throbbing head, 'Father Eternal! I exclaim, let me now sleep till the world tumbles into chaos, and till the beams of thy glory animate the spirit which thou hast said shall live unfading ages!'

"Roncorone," cried Alberti, "do not thus agitate yourself; your passions will tear you in pieces. You bleed too; you must be faint; let me apply something to your wound."

I assured him it was only a scratch, not telling him, however, what had occasioned it; and Paulo bringing in some water, I removed the stain from my face. I then again drew near to my friend, and, for a moment forgetting part of my own sorrows, enquired how he had struggled through his recent afflictions. His heart was too noble for querulous complaint; yet the manner in which he replied to me was very affecting.

I learned

I learned that, after I had left him at Venice, he had, though appearances were previously in some degree favourable, relapsed into pain and distraction, and that few days had elapsed since his physician allowed him to go abroad. His first enquiries had been respecting me, and at Venice he became acquainted with my miseries.

He now exerted all his powers in persuading me to return to the city, but I would not consent to accompany him; I was bound to the place in which I then lived, and could not fly from it.

I wished to die there—to begin my pilgrimage from thence to the regions in which the spirit of Rosalie was then awaiting me, to penetrate and become familiar to those things which God has wrapped in mystery. My soul anxiously strove to burst its bonds; sometimes I thought it actually

was

was forcing its prison-gates, and the temporary trances into which my giddy brain was lulled, were, at their commencement, considered as the effects of the approaching oblivion of mortality; but I was both deceived and disappointed by them.

Alberti staid several days with me; he was, however, compelled to go back to Venice; and as I declined going with him, we separated, and all my sorrows, my griefs, and my distractions returned with unabated force. The story of a gossip had now as much effect on me as the precepts of philosophy—even as those which my departed uncle had often dressed in the beauties of language, and which would sometimes for a moment cross my mind.

At the end of a month Alberti was again with me—kind, generous, good Alberti! His heart was tortured for me; and while

he

he threw his arms around me, he entreated me to put aside my despondency, and to trust myself to the guidance of his friendship. I loved him the more for his solicitude, but still refused to comply with his proposal, when he appeared more distressed and mortified, and for several succeeding days he remained silent on the subject. Had my mother given birth to him and to myself at the same hour, I could not have loved him more; and what man should be to man, so was I to him, and he to me.

One evening he had talked me into a seeming tranquillity, and Paulo had furnished him with a bottle of choice wine: I took a glass of it, and Alberti pressed another upon me; a third was afterwards accepted;—the effect it had on me I thought very strange, for I almost on the instant grew drowsy; my head fell upon my breast,
and

and in a few minutes I was in a profound sleep.

When I awoke, I found myself, to my surprise, in an unknown apartment, and on raising my head, saw Alberti gazing on me; I was going to make some immediate enquiries of him, but he threw himself across me on the bed, and entreated me to forgive him.

“But where am I?” I enquired.

“First tell me, dear Roncorone,” he replied, “that you will not hate me for what I have done.”

“Hate you, Alberti! such are you to me, and so has Nature attached you to my heart, that when I direct such a sentiment towards you, I must condemn myself. But answer me—where am I?”

“In Venice, Roncorone!”

“In

"In Venice! I can scarcely believe it; it seems to me an impossibility. But what, Alberti, have I to do in Venice?"

"To regain a part of that happiness which you have lost, to assume a different habit of life, and to hail the prospects of returning tranquillity."

"Oh, vain and impracticable!" I exclaimed. "But how came I hither?"

"By stratagem," he replied. "I infused an opiate in your wine, and while you remained in a torpid state, effected my purpose—a purpose to which my arguments had been unequal. I am now, Roncorone, at your mercy; dear friend! the love that I bear for you prompted me in this project. With misery have I beheld your late sufferings; with misery have seen the torture of your body, and the distractions of your mind. I imagined them to be partly local;
and

and being convinced that a change of place could alone avert that fate which was hanging over you, I used the present artifice, and have thus far succeeded; and if you love me, or respect yourself, you will reside for a while under this roof, and suffer me in some degree to influence your conduct."

"Endeavour to make me whatever you please," I replied; "but be not angry if my nature will not bend on every occasion: there may be an obstinacy in it that will not submit to controul; be not impatient, therefore, at my infirmities."

Alberti took me in his arms, assuring me that I was the chief object of his affection and concern, and that my habits of life should not be opposed while I continued to reside with him, unless friendship prompted it. Nature had placed in his breast one of the best of hearts, had stored it with feelings
the

the most lively, passions the most noble, affections the most permanent, and sensibilities the most acute ; many times did he cherish me, and many times, like a watchful and eloquent angel, did he check the resolve of self-destruction. He would sometimes induce me to leave my chamber, and to sit with him in the balcony ; he afterwards prevailed on me to go on the water, and at length drew me into some of the public walks of the city, though I entered into none of the pleasures of those who frequented them.

One day I met Salvini. The sight of him agitated me exceedingly ; and when his eyes encountered mine, the colour of his cheeks faded, and he seemed to stagger as he passed by me. His visible agitation I imputed to a recent cause, and he being
dressed

ressed in mourning, my suspicion, was strengthened.

Alberti saw my distress, and hastened home with me; the little tranquillity that I had regained, was molested; I was prompted to make some enquiries concerning Salvini, and the next morning was informed that he had abruptly left the city, and was gone into the country. His motives for departure I did not enquire into, nor did there appear to me any thing very extraordinary in the circumstance;—I concluded that he was really penitent for his follies and errors; that the horrid fate of my wife hung heavily on his mind; and that my re-appearance, my evident affliction, and my skeleton form, were not, in the moments of contrition, to be regarded by him without extreme pain.

I now began to wish that I had not been drawn from my solitude;—Alberti was
acquainted

acquainted with the nature of my thoughts; and, in order to banish them, he requested me to make an excursion with him, and urged me so much, that at length I agreed to accompany him to Rome. The journey was of singular service to the health of my friend, and I was benefited by it;—we arrived at the Papal dominions without any misadventure; and, on entering the city, limited our continuance in it to a month.

The circle of Alberti's friends in this place was rather narrow, but highly respectable; and to a few of his more sedate acquaintances I was introduced by him. My mind, however, was not long to be diverted; neither time, nor place, nor circumstance could amend it; my looks of serenity were all affected, and my apparent easiness was brought about by hypocrisy. I still despised the shackles of life, still panted for a rapid flight

flight to eternity. Rome to me was as good as Venice; every place was indeed alike, for in every place I was equally unhappy.

Alberti was no longer in the army; his father had been a German, and his mother an Italian; and being attached to the country of the latter, he had passed the greater part of his time in it even before he assumed the military character. His health was now almost perfectly re-established; and having formed several new acquaintances, he expressed a wish to continue some considerable time in Rome:—I agreed still to be with him, and we accordingly engaged a house for a year, and had it prepared for our immediate reception. Still perceiving that I was unwilling to be often abroad, he never opposed my inclination; but his natural vivacity was frequently checked

checked by my gravity, and I had reason to suppose that no man possessed so large a share of his love as he bestowed upon me. We however sometimes made small excursions into the country, and, when at Rome, I was in the habit of endeavouring to sooth my mind with religion.

Neither the history nor the antiquities of this once renowned city were interesting to me;—the time, indeed, had been when I read of the events recorded to have happened in it, with a great degree of pleasure, of delight, and of wonder; when my mind followed the emperors and warriors of remote days through all the various scenes of enterprise and glory, and attended them in their proud prosperities, and also in their deep adversities. The sages of past times had filled me with admiration, while the sons of the lyre sprung the secret mines of

sensibility and of ecstasy. But I was no longer susceptible of these feelings; Nature had received a blow from the hand of Apathy, of which she had sickened and mortified.

The amphitheatres, the temples of the Gods! What to me? Columns rose, and surprised me not; ruins nodded, and I felt no awe. My contemplations rested not on the wonders of art, the vestiges of grandeur, or the statues of the Pagan deities; but they were fixed, almost invariably fixed on the frailty of human life, and the instability of man's happiness. I sometimes indeed wandered out alone, pain warping my heart, and misery hanging over my mind; chusing the evening hour, I frequently strolled into the suburbs, and found myself among pillars and arches, halls damp and desolate, and recesses in which murder
had

had secretly prowled. Still my own misery occupied my thoughts; and as I reclined my fallow cheek against the cold marble, I made echo each moment speak the name of my dear lamented wife.

My soul at these times would sicken, and I have been near fainting in the solitude; when I recovered little strength, however, I went again to my home, to a bed in which there was no repose. Ah! why did I so? why did I not force my half-inclined heart to burst asunder at once, and lay me down amongst the rubbish, and die neglected and unknown? .

I might have crept into one of the small and narrow cavities; respiration would soon have ceased, and I should have made myself a secret grave, which the eye of man probably would not have peeped into till I had become bloated, corrupted, and defaced; nay, per-

haps not till I had wholly been converted into a whitened skeleton.

There might, in that case, have been food for the antiquaries—ha! ha!—"It is, in truth, the body of Cæsar, Sir! I have not a single doubt but that is the fact! Wonderful discovery! precious relics of an illustrious hero! Examine the magnitude of each particular bone, how immense, gigantic! I will sell you his scull for a thousand ducats."—"A thousand! it is too much; but I will give you two hundred for it."—"You are my very particular friend, and therefore shall have it at that price; but to such terms from any other person, I assure you, I would not listen a single moment."

Ah, Roncorone! you might have had your pate handled by every virtuoso with the most profound respect. Why did
your

your ambition fall into such an idle slumber?

* * * * *

My friend Alberti became attached to a young, amiable, and wealthy woman who resided in Rome, and on her heart he made a very favourable impression; indeed, most women must have loved him, for he was as sweet in his disposition as in his countenance; and to his qualities of wit and good-humour were added the more tender ones of humanity and benevolence. He introduced me to his fair companion, and I instantly saw her merit; she appeared to me in every respect a suitable partner for him; there was apparently a similarity in their minds, a conformity in their manners; and it was evident that she had many requisites and recommendations, independent of the

beauty of her face, and of the extent of her fortune.

I felt a pleasure, the first I had felt for many preceding months, when I contemplated the happy prospect of Alberti; but ah! when he spoke seriously to me of his premeditated connexion,—when he talked of marriage, and demanded my opinion of it,—whether I would advise him to enter into it immediately, or wait till time should further shew him the character and disposition of the woman,—whether I did not consider the state as most felicitous and happy,—a thousand remembrances rushed in my mind, and I was obliged to retire from him, being overcome by grief, without speaking. I returned to him again, however, in the course of a few minutes, with the resolution of being firm, when he gently pressed me to his heart, and entreated me

to

to forgive him for the pain that he had so inadvertently occasioned me.

“ My feebleness is gone over,” I replied, “ and I am strong again, at least sufficiently strong to talk with my dear friend Alberti. The state of marriage, that we were preparing to speak of:—I had no long experience of what it is, yet——”

“ Let us separate, Roncorone,” said Alberti; “ I will see you again in the evening; or shall we walk together? the day is invitingly fine.”

“ Ah! I see what your suspicions are; but you are deceived. What! must a man never forget that he has been unfortunate? If such were the general maxim of the world, who would be without a countenance of sorrow? In that case, tears would be as plentiful as the rain of heaven, and the sick sighs of millions would make the

air obnoxious, and breed a general plague and pestilence. Alberti! you talk as if philosophy had no precepts. What if they are given in the moments of tranquillity, by him who is unaffected by the ill-chances of life, must we, who are so forcibly preached to, in the hour of actual misery suspect that we have been merely listening to sophisms, or that we have any cause to mourn beyond the hour in which we foolishly suffer our sorrows to commence? Oh fie, Alberti! The stoics, and we have them even in these days, would regard you either as a man of weakness, or of depravity."

"We will talk on this subject hereafter," said my friend; "pray let us walk. It is unusual with you to deal in irony; but when you speak it with wildness, I confess I have many fears for you."

"Fear

“Fear nothing; the seal of reason is still unbroken, still firmly stamped upon my mind. The state of marriage—Oh how sweet! a good and tender wife—how precious! how excellent! Do the occurrences of the world disturb your temper? Fly to the sympathetic bosom of your partner, and on it she will lull you to a forgetfulness of them. Are misfortunes threatening to assail you? She will tell you not to despair; she will dissipate with her smiles the gloom of despondency, and the damp vapours of imagination. Ah, Alberti! had Heaven but spared *my* wife——”

“Oh! I lament that it did not!”

“But it tore her from me!”

“Talk not of it now, dear friend.”

“Cruelly, cruelly tore her from me! her death, how horrid!”

“Forbear, Roncorone! you melt my soul as well as your own.”

“Oh how horrid! in the flames she called on me! when she was blistering, she called on me!”

“You will destroy yourself, Roncorone.”

“But I was not there, could not meet her outstretched hand! could not alleviate even one of her fierce tortures!”

“In Heaven there are no pains; there all is pleasure; there, at this moment, smiles your angelic wife!”

“True, comforter; you shall be still nearer to my heart for this consolation. Oh! that God would, as a compensation for my many afflictions, tell my spirit to rove with her from this moment eternally among the sweets of his paradise! The period of my life will not, I think, be a long one; the hour of my dissolution, I trust, is not far distant.

distant. Speed it, Holy Father! speed it, righteous Comforter of mankind! Alberti, your hand! The woman of your choice is excellent; I have noticed her words, her actions, and placed her among the number of the worthy. Marry her—accept the hand she offers to you; and as there is such an incertitude in the affairs of human life, do not procrastinate your happiness, but attempt to secure it while it seems readily to be obtained. This is my advice; and now I will walk with you, for my mind is again soothed.”

Though I gave Alberti this assurance, he regarded me with a melancholy aspect, and his eyes expressed at once the whole language of compassion.

Some few days afterwards he informed me that every necessary arrangement had been made for the nuptials, which were to

be celebrated within a week.—“I am glad to hear it,” I replied; “within a week, then, dear friend, you and I must part.”

“How!” he cried; “part, Roncorone?”

“Yes, Alberti, I will withdraw; whither I have not yet determined; I shall, however, prefer a solitude to a city. If I have only inanimate things, or the beast tenants of a forest to gaze on, my spleen will never be excited; and even should the rustics of the hamlet come to gape at me, while I yet seem a novelty, I shall consider their instinct as harmless, and not chide them for impertinence when I find neither the marks of malice nor of deceit upon the brows of the men, nor the leers of wantonness in the eyes of the women—the general distinctions of the sexes in crowded societies. And yet, dear Alberti, I shall leave you with pain—with pain, which the self-assurance

assurance of never seeing you thereafter will, in the moments of my weakness, serve to increase.

"You shall not go from me," said Alberti; "indeed you must not!"

"Pray give me no opposition," I answered, "for what I said was seriously intended; the happiness, or rather the tranquillity of my life depends on it. The air of populous places suits not my constitution; and though I have not much observation to bestow, new manners, new habits and customs perhaps may——no, I cannot flatter myself that they ever will amuse me. Having neither misanthropy in my heart, nor enthusiasm in my mind, I shall be no breeder of corruption; and it is probable that I shall only have time to chuse a little spot of earth for a resting-place for my bones, before the villagers will

have occasion to say to each other—

“ Friends, the stranger is dead ; let us pass his body to the grave on the bier, and cover it over with a turf.”

“ And you *will* leave me, Roncorone? leave me in the happiest moments of my life?”

“ Could there have been a better season for my departure,” I replied, “ since your happiness depends not on me? If it did, I would struggle with my feelings till they tore asunder the strings of my heart, sooner than play the ingrate, and leave you. But as you love me, do not prevent my going; strive not, I beseech you, to impede my intended journey.”

“ I will not, dear, unhappy friend,” he cried. “ Grant me, however, one request.”

“ What is that, Alberti?”

“ Go

“Go not hence till after my marriage—not till a month afterwards; when that time shall have passed by, I promise to offer no further dissuasion, nor in any manner to check your inclinations. But ah, Roncorone! you must not think that even the possession of my love, her charms, or her smiles will deter my mind from following you and your wretchedness, or still the sighs that will collect in my bosom when I think of and pity your destiny.”

“Oh! is there on earth another friend like you?” I exclaimed, rushing into his arms, and melting into tenderness. My emotions silenced me for some time, and I had not power to raise my head from the tender and generous breast on which it had fallen.

“You consent then?” said Alberti, mildly; “you will, for the time I have mentioned, postpone your departure?”

“It

"It would be ingratitude in me," I replied, "not to comply with your request; but as I can never more assume the mask of pleasure, never more admit either joy or merriment into my heart, which grief seems to have hollowed, think not unkindly of me if, when some happier friend shall step forth to congratulate you on your attainment, my tongue shall remain in silence, and my features soften not at your felicity."

The answer of Alberti was in his usual terms of tenderness and affection; but the intention which I had expressed to him seemed to touch him deeply, and I saw that he was internally struggling to conquer very ardent emotions, and to restrain himself from these dissuasions, which he had promised to withhold from me at an after period.

When

When I retired at night to my chamber, I thought more seriously of my deparrure than I had done before.—“ But whither shall I go ?” I said, addressing myself ; “ to what particular spot shall I direct my steps ? Yet is not that a needless question ? Is not the world immense, infinite ? Has not the hand of God, mysterious Creator ! scattered his germs immeasurably wide ? The soil, the climate, they are nothing to me ; let the one be barren and unfruitful, my appetites will not quarrel with it ; and should an unceasing pestilence attend the other, where will be the danger, now my health is irreparably injured ? It may, indeed, serve to quicken the slow plagues which are now lazily creeping within me ; but I will defy it to produce any original ones. In every nation, in every province, in every desolate isle there is a bed for the most wretched being,

being, for the sorriest outcast, on which he may lay himself down, and sleep away for ever his pain and anxieties;—my wants extend no further; to this they are limited, and *this* is a privilege of which the united malice of the world cannot deprive me.”

Before the morning, however, I had brought my mind to make some arrangements, for which I felt somewhat the more tranquil, and, I believe, looked the happier. Alberti married, and, as I had promised, I attended at the espousals, though it occasioned me many a pain, and many an inward struggle. Afflicted as my heart was, I wished not my face to betray my sufferings; but rather strove to hide them under an artificial pleasure, and alternately smiled upon my friend and his blooming bride. He had been present at my marriage, had stood by my side when the priest gave my
smiling

smiling Rosolie to me :—Oh ! how difficult was the task to think on that circumstance, and still wear a placid aspect !

The company that assembled at Alberti's house was not very numerous ; many of the bride's relations and friends, however, were there, and the face of every person was animated by pleasure. Alberti's transport was generally visible, but even on that day the pitying sigh of friendship did not fail to pass over the full tide of his joy ; it came upon, and almost dissolved me. Blaming myself, however, as the cause of it, I made a still more arduous attempt both to look and talk as if I stood in no need of such exquisite commiseration and sympathy ; but, as he had well-studied my manners and habits, I could not fully expect the imposition to pass undetected. His wife was no less attentive to me than himself, and she often turned from the festive

tive party to address herself to me, which she did with a grace and sweetness of tone of which I could not, interested principally in my own concerns as I had been, fail to be sensible.

Pleased was I, however, at the coming of night, and at the departure of such of the company as made my retiring, without an excuse, neither improper nor singular; I hastened to my chamber, and my heart seemed incapable of throwing out its collected sorrows with sufficient speed; I became almost as feeble as I was in childhood, and in that state, some little time afterwards, did Alberti break in upon me.

"You are come to chide me," I said, when I perceived him.

"Oh, no!" he cried, "rather to console, to comfort you."

"Attempt

"Attempt it not; the task would be wholly fruitless. Leave me, dear Alberti, to myself, for my impositions will not stretch any further. Good night—God bless you!"

"Do not let me leave you thus miserable," he said; "return to the company, crush this unavailing sorrow, this destructive anguish!"

"No, no," I replied; "leave me, I again entreat you; concern not yourself for me; sleep and happy dreams I may enjoy before the morning. Go, Alberti; your fair bride is expecting you, for the hour is growing late. Cast not a thought on a forlorn and pining wretch like me; I should be tempted to curse myself if I were to damp one of your joys at such a season as this. Good night! and the felicities of love attend you!"

"Good

“ Good night! good night!” he exclaimed; “and may the balm of Heaven be poured into your wounded soul by the swiftest and most benevolent of its ministering spirits.”

The two first weeks of the limited month were spent by me with more tranquillity and smoothness of temper than I could have previously expected; and I waited, without any apparent anxiety or impatience, for the passing by of the two which were next to follow. I had even accustomed myself to speak of my removal calmly to Alberti; to discourse collectedly with him concerning the spot which I had chosen for my retreat; and to demand his opinion on some little arrangements which were necessary to be made before I quitted Rome, and all other thick residences of men.

He

He forgot not the promise he had made to me, though I saw the increase of his concern as the period of our separation advanced; his wife, however, whose mind and heart, if possible, rivalled her sweet and innocent countenance, was under no such restraint, and for a while she importuned me to break my design, and still to continue an inmate with them; but afterwards, I conjectured by his desire, she dropped her entreaties on the subject, and only seemed to lament the necessity of her silence, and to regret the division which was about to take place between me and her truly worthy husband.

Such was the posture of my affairs, and the state of my concerns, when one morning, exactly after a residence of eight months in Rome, in the church of St. Peter * * *

* * * * *

Yet

Yet may it not be rash to touch on that circumstance? May not bad and dangerous effects arise from it? Be it so; still I will on——

——One morning, in the church of St. Peter, my devotions, as well as those of many other persons, were interrupted by the shrieks of a female; I hastily raised my head, and looking towards the spot from whence the noise seemed to come, saw a woman sink on the pavement. A number of people soon gathered around her; I could not get near to her, nor could I see her face; and in a few minutes she was carried out of the church, and the service again continued.

Three days after this occurrence, which, being a common one, I had almost forgotten, as I was entering Alberti's house, a woman, whom I had observed some time before, came
up

up to me in a hasty and singular manner; with extreme agitation she delivered to me a letter, and at the same time sighed heavily, and pressed my hand. She held her veil so as every feature was concealed; and having given me the paper, ran from me, and turning down a narrow street, instantly disappeared.

This was strange; I hastened into the house, unfolded the paper, and found that it contained the following warning:—

“ Roncorone, beware! misery is in Rome; fly from it—instantly fly from it!”

I was startled for a moment:—the note was evidently from a female hand; but I knew not the characters, nor could imagine to what misery or danger it alluded. My surprise, however, was greater than my alarm. Alberti and his wife were gone into the country for two days, I having declined

accompanying them; but thinking the monition idle, on the following morning I went again into the streets, without any serious, or even light apprehension. I walked about a considerable time, and looked shrewdly at many faces; but discovering in none of them the features of an enemy, I returned home again.

I knocked at the door; the stranger was again at my elbow. She thrust another paper into my hand, groaned dreadfully, and vanished before I had time to leave the portico. My astonishment increased; I hurried through the hall, and reaching my chamber, opened this second mysterious scroll. Horrid and dreadful! it said—it said—

“Rosolie lives! but the hour of her dissolution is near; she has seen Roncorone—her beloved, her blessed Roncorone! Holy
be

be the walls of St. Peter for it! Husband, they told me you were dead—they have abused me—God, how abused me! I am innocent—I am innocent! But I am polluted—aye, Roncorone, stained and polluted! Oh my dear husband! I shall never be near you again; my hand shall never touch, my eyes never see you more. Happier would it be if the whole world were placed between us, if unnavigated seas rolled betwixt your virtue and my impurities; I would not have the same wind blow on us, lest, in its passage to you, it should receive a most foul taint from the once chaste partner of your bosom. Oh! the contagion of my body springs up into my brain, and renews my craziness! Husband, if I may now call you by a name that once was tender to me, that in days gone by was sweet to utter,—husband, farewell eternally!

nally ! If my eyes shall open in the regions of purer light, they will ever be inclining to the lesser world, to watch for the pilgrim spirit of Roncorone. Farewel ! but fly from Rome ! fly from Rome !”

I sunk on the floor ; but my senses did not wholly leave me, though my brain heated quickly. Living ! astonishing ! beyond every thing astonishing ! In Rome ! so near to me ! Pol—polluted ! God of Heaven and of earth ! living and polluted ! For a moment I strove to regard it as a fiction more monstrous and unnatural than any of those of antiquity ; but her own hand, her well-known hand confirmed it a reality.

Polluted !

I grew frenzied, mad as the northern blast, as the billows of the sea it blustered upon—nay, even as a volcano at the moment of its most dreadful explosion. I impiously

piously cursed the Heavens above my head, the earth, every thing that moved on it, every damnable biped that bore the name of man—man! that combination of brutal matter, that heterogeneous monster, which a perverted intercourse of ape and wolf, producing rankness, savageness, and deformity, could not equal.

I did not groan, but I shrieked, and dried my mouth with curses; stupidity, however, afterwards sunk me on the floor, and in that state I continued, till Alberti, who had just returned to Rome, came in, and roused me from my lethargy.

“Who is the villain?” I cried, seizing and grasping him; “who is the villain? I’ll stake my life against your’s, Alberti, it is that abominable fiend, that son of hell, Salvini!”

My senses again deserted me, and the explanation was partly given to my friend by the horrid scroll that lay at his feet.

* * * * *

About ten days after this circumstance, and what passed in the interval I know not, I thus addressed Alberti:—"I will find out my wife, and we will again be united. If a score of barbarians have used her, is she the less innocent? She fell not by guilt; she sinned not in the ferment of her passions; she was not lost in the glutinous sea of lust. She shall be near my heart again!"

"Dear Roncorone!" said Alberti, "this may be some stratagem of the designing. Recollect the fire; your wife must be, alas! lost to you for ever!"

"She is not. If it be true that there is a God in Heaven, a man on earth, that there are changes in the seasons, or any qualities
in

in the elements, so true it is that she is living."

" 'Tis strange!—very strange!"

"But it is true, fatally true!"

"Dreadful!" exclaimed Alberti, shrinking.

"Horrid! horrid! Oh Alberti! had she been confined in the flames a year before she lost the sense of feeling them, it would not have equalled this. Who is the villain? Who should it be but Salvini? Spare me distraction a little while; let me pluck out the heart of that rank monster, and what I may be thereafter I know not, care not. Alberti, search with me—assist me in discovering the sufferer!"

I broke from him, and ran wildly into the streets;—he followed, and his assiduities alone saved me from destruction; for my actions were those of a mad man, and it

was a considerable time before he could draw me again into the house. He had no power to calm me; but, in some degree, he convinced me that no immediate discovery could possibly be made of this mysterious and horrid business, and that precipitation on my part might altogether frustrate my designs. He did not preach patience to me; for his own trembling lips and colourless face shewed me how much he was agitated.

I raved away the night, referring often to the distracted epistle of my wife; and the body of the sun, whose beams were cast on me in the morning, could scarcely bear a greater degree of heat than my brain.

Orders were given to the servants to stop the bearer of any letter that might be addressed to me; and in the afternoon a boy was brought before me, and with him a
folded

folded paper, directed by the same hand that had written the first mysterious note, and containing these words:—

“ Be merciful, Signor, to one who has sinned, and whose repentance hourly torments her heart. Your wife is bending over the grave, and surely I am not far from it. Signor, I am a guilty wretch, yet do not curse me till you have heard me. Admit me to-morrow morning at eight; if you kill me on the spot, I shall not, even in the moments of death, suffer more pain than I now do, and for a long time past have done. Attempt not to discover me to-night, for your search would end in disappointment. The bearer of this note knows nothing of me, nor will he ever see me more; yet by him, if he be trusty, and observe my directions, I shall learn whether you will to-morrow

D 5

morrow hear the confessions of a contrite and repentant wretch."

I read, wondered, trembled, almost fainted. The boy told me that a woman, whom he had met in a street, which he named, had given him some money to convey the letter to me; and that she had charged him, if I were at home, to return by the same street, and walk through it with his head uncovered, by which, though she intended to be invisible, she should know whether he had succeeded. The boy spoke with much simplicity; and fearing a discovery impracticable, though my tortured soul prompted me to aim at it, I suffered him to depart, nor attempted to follow him. I however charged him to observe strictly the strange directions of the hidden woman, and enforced them by doubling his reward.

I was

I was waking the whole night; and during some part of it, my frame was so convulsed, that Alberti, who, at different periods, left the apartment of his wife to visit me, thought that Death was seriously commencing his operations on me.

Rosalie was in my soul, in my eye; I saw her pale, withered, dying. How dreadful is the intellectual sight! It then made me groan, and almost drew my eyes out of their sockets. I heard the clock strike eight; Alberti could scarcely hold me. In about five minutes the mysterious woman came trembling into the room; when I ran up to her, seized her by the arm, and tearing off her veil, beheld Lucilla, the woman who had formerly resided with me, and who I thought had perished in the flames with her mistress, and with the man that attended on me.

She shrieked, and fell on the floor, and my own enervated limbs only bore me to the arms of Alberti before they wholly failed me.

It was some considerable time ere the wretch could be persuaded to raise her head; she afterwards, in bursts of agony, horror, and remorse, gave me the following shocking narrative.

Before I had engaged her to wait upon my wife, she and Stephano, my other servant, had entered into an illicit connexion, which was subsequently continued under my roof. Having made her subservient to his purpose, he not only withdrew a promise of marriage, on which she had foolishly relied, but totally reversed his speech, his manners, and conduct, and often treated her with uncommon severity and brutality. Pregnancy was the effect of their cohabitation; the family of
the

the girl being respectable, and dreading the resentment and shame that would fall on her, she endeavoured to make him what he formerly appeared, and professed to be, and also renewed her entreaties; but was again inhumanly repulsed. For several days the villain's savage temper was displayed on every occasion, and blows often succeeded the curses which he heaped, without measure, upon his astonished victim, who confessed to me that she had become such by the impulse of a real affection.

It was the cause of much surprise, and also of equal pleasure, when she afterwards discovered in him a great degree of kindness, and heard him talk distantly of making her the reparation she had demanded; but that, he informed her, must be on conditions which he would soon make known to her. He assured her that her own conduct

duct must determine whether the union should take place immediately, or be forever put aside; and having drawn from the anxious girl an assurance that she would be guided by him in every circumstance, if he would avert her impending infamy, and the curses of an honest and reputable father, the diabolical villain one evening, when I and Rosalie were from home, began his projects, of which she had no conception or intimation, and hurried her to a place some distance from the house, where, to her astonishment, she beheld Signor Salvini, who seemed to have been impatiently waiting for their arrival.

She now began to fear that some horrible designs were forming; and her conjecture was right, for she was desired to become an agent in the perpetration of them: and hoping to make her willingly such, Salvini
forced

forced upon her a large sum of money. It was now too late to retract ; a savage resolution was fixed on the brow of Stephano, who cautioned her with his finger, while he assured Salvini that any project he might form, should be entered into at whatever time he directed, or thought most proper.

After this they had several meetings, all equally private, and tending to the ruin of me and Rosolie ; and the gold of Salvini most plentifully fed the avarice of Stephano. The plot for burning of my house, and carrying off my wife, was now planned and debated on. Lucilla, horror-stricken, refused to become an accessory ; but Stephano swore if she did not consent to it, she should not live to give birth to her child. Salvini, having endeavoured, with fiendlike cunning, to laugh away her scruples of conscience, proposed an oath in order to bind
her,

her, when he found his diabolical irony had no effect on her. Stephano's eyes expressed at a single glance the state of his savage soul; and dreading his malice and cruelty, she swore to aid them in their designs.

I trembled while, with evident anguish, the girl continued to inform me that—

After this meeting, Stephano seldom suffered her to be out of his sight; and if at any time she attempted to argue with him, or seemed to shrink from the vow of compulsion, it only drew from him horrid threats and brutal language.

He one evening said to her, “ This is the night of our experiment; the Signor is from home; he is gone to Venice to see Signor Alberti, who has had an ugly cut in the dark, which is a circumstance that highly favours our plot. Mind how you conduct yourself; follow my directions in every thing,

thing, and our reward will be a golden one." She was running from him with terror; but perceiving that her design was to fly to her mistress, he threw her on the floor, and dragged her back again. Her fear, and the state in which she then unhappily was, made her submissive; she entreated him to do her no injury, and he released her, but upon the condition of her not placing herself in the way of her Lady, and also on her promise of accompanying him and Salvini without noise or resistance.

She attended her mistress to her chamber about eleven o'clock; but, in order to keep her from prating, Stephano, after my wife had entered the apartment, placed himself at the door, with an unsheathed stiletto in his hand, of which circumstance he had previously acquainted the wretched girl. Rosolie soon dismissed Lucilla, who afterwards

wards went down the stairs with the awaiting Stephano, and in the course of a few minutes Salvini was silently, and with great caution, admitted into the house. Above half an hour was spent by these hellish contrivers in secret talk, when the former went up stairs, and returning almost immediately, assured Salvini that the work was done.

The petrified Lucilla, not at that instant recollecting the plot that had been recently hinted to her, thought that these ambiguous words of her seducer probably alluded to the murder of her mistress; but after a few minutes of silent suspense, she heard a crackling noise, and saw that some part of the building was on fire, when Salvini seized her by the arm, and hurried her to a carriage at some distance from the house, while his accessory ran up to the chambers.

Lucilla

Lucilla waited not long before he came to her, bearing Rosolie totally senseless. Detesting him now as much as she had once loved him, she called him a villain and a murderer, and attempted to shriek for assistance; but both he and Salvini prevented her by means insufferably severe, which almost brought suffocation upon her.

When Rosolie recovered from her swoon, shrinking and with terror, she asked where she was, the carriage being darkened so as to keep out the moon-beams. To her question Stephano replied that he was taking her to the Signor; but Salvini remained silent, and Lucilla was scarcely allowed to utter a single word. Stephano informed his mistress that it was not probable any part of the building could withstand the flames; and that, as there were no houses near to it, no assistance could be expected. He added,
that

that he had thought it most proper to convey her from the danger as speedily as possible, and that he had taken the precaution of dispatching a messenger to the Signor at Venice, to apprise him cautiously of the accident, and prepare him to receive her without any excessive alarm or astonishment on her arrival.

This part of the villain's artifice was managed with sufficient skill, and drew forth the thanks and acknowledgments of my betrayed and unsuspecting wife.

They had travelled nearly an hour when the coach stopped, and Salvini got out of it; the day was but just breaking, and he was muffled up so as to prevent Rosalie making any discovery of his person as he quitted the vehicle. Had she enquired who he was, Stephano was doubtless prepared with an answer; but she was too much agitated

tated to notice particularly what seemed of but little importance.

Stephano descended with Salvini, on the pretence of being called by the driver to assist in disentangling some part of the harness; but he first spoke some few words to Lucilla, which, though inexplicable to Rosalie, were fully understood by the person to whom they were addressed. The almost stupified girl therefore sat silent and motionless; Stephano, however, returned almost instantly, unaccompanied, and springing into the carriage (the freedom of which action he hypocritically hoped his Lady would pardon), he ordered the driver, a wretch trained into villany by Salvini, to go forward.

They had proceeded but a little further, when a man rode up to the door, and having enquired the names of the travellers, informed

informed Rosolie that Signor Roncorone had dispatched him to say that he had left Venice on a very urgent occasion, relating to the affairs of Signor Alberti, who had died within the last six hours, which he would explain to her at their meeting; and that he had sent a carriage and a lady of his acquaintance to take her to the place where he should be anxiously expecting her.

† Gross as the improbability was, it did not strike Rosolie; too greatly agitated to combine circumstances, and calculate time, she left the coach that had brought her from her burning house, and desired Lucilla to go with her. The girl now uttered a piercing shriek; for she saw her Lady seized rudely by the ruffian who had told the abominable lie, and hurried away by him. Stephano, enraged by her conduct, savagely struck her on the forehead, and in a threatening manner

drew his cold dagger across her throat ; nor did she see her mistress for the course of three weeks after this period, when she found her at Rome, almost frenzied, guarded by Stephano, and—and—defiled by Salvini!

* * * * *

Oh! this task is too much! too horrid!

* * * * *

Ye hours, how unheeded have you passed! ye seasons, I am almost unconscious of your change! The breezes of Spring may have blown sweetly over the heads of the mountains; Summer may have clothed the earth with flowers more bright and luxuriant than those of her departed sister; under the sunny smiles of Autumn the fruit of the vineyards ripened into delicious perfection; and lo! now over the summit of every precipice, Winter wrathfully whirls his immense stores of hail and snow, and unchains all his
foul

foul and turbulent spirits, and gives them to the elements!

To thy cell, Roncorone—to thy cell for a little while,—then to thy cold damp grave for ever! That circumscribed domain, in which man can display neither his consequence nor insignificance,—where nothing is dependant on him, and where, though he may have been a sceptred tyrant, the scourge, the dread of millions—the sorriest reptile shall assert its superiority over him. The mortal, when reflecting on this state, and knowing it to be inevitable, generally feels a sensation, as if the cold worms had begun to twine around the veins of his body, though the spirit be still the tenant of it. No such emotions, however, trouble me; I shrink not at the prospect, see no gloom hanging over it; but if Death were to send one of his mysterious harbingers to
me,

me, the monster, hideous and frightful as he might appear, should not find me loath to be led by him to the world of shadows. We sojourn not long in that dark country; we go through it into regions exquisitely bright, there to reside, as we are told—assurance too sweet for either doubt or disbelief!—for——

Wife of my soul! the period of our re-union is at hand; descend—come down to me, for under thy guidance my flight to Heaven will be more rapturous. Alberti, I would thy friendly hand could lay me in the earth! Yet why, dear, generous man, should I wish to give another pang to thee? No, no! it will be better to die unknown and unregretted.

The panegyrics bestowed on departed Princes are often known to be undeserved; on the tombs of Nobles the sculptor may

place his expressive statues, and cut the characters of the inflated epitaph, that tells a lie to every one who passes near to it. It is the consecrated grave of the peasant on which my eye rests with a serene pleasure;—his virtues are recorded only in the memories of his few simple friends; his widow directs the defending briar; his children's little hands root up every weed; the finger of the honest man points towards the turf—the mansion of a sleeping brother; and the affectionate swain, as he bends over it, gives a voluntary tear to him who has sighed for thousands. Pride! I want not thy honours and trophies. Humility! may my sleep be as tranquil as thine, and my hour of waking as glorious! But I shall have no widow to direct the defending briar, no little children to root the weeds from my grave!

The

The head-ache, the heart-ache are subsiding. After this long pause, and on the continuance of Lucilla's information, I proceed :—

Salvini soon after quitted Rome, as the violence he had done to Rosolie had distracted her; she raved frantically for her husband, and constantly endeavoured to make herself mistress of some instrument of destruction. The sight of Stephano was evidently horrid to her; a considerable time elapsed before she would allow even Lucilla to come near to her; and it was two months before that wretched girl was permitted to extenuate her seeming guilt by a relation of melancholy facts and incidents which concerned the conspiracy. This information, however, was not at that time perfectly understood; for Rosolie, at some periods, possessed a faint remembrance only

of what was past, and she would earnestly talk of returning to her husband ; but her health, as well as her mind, were rapidly decaying, and Lucilla saw that she was stepping towards the grave.

The girl assured me that she frequently expostulated with the brutal Stephano ; but the accumulating gold of Salvini made him every day more and more a villain. Roused at length by the cruelty of the monster, Lucilla was thrown into so violent a passion, that a premature labour succeeded, and the fruit of her detested intercourse came into the world unperfected.

It was nearly a month before she again saw her wretched mistress, whom she found almost in the state of non-existence. The house that Salvini had placed them in was small and private ; but it was his intention soon to remove them to some place still
more

more retired. Stephano was sensual and luxurious; hating Lucilla now for what he called her affected humanity, he brought into the house a young prostitute, and openly cohabited with her, while the wine furnished by Salvini kept him in a state of almost continual intoxication. He bestowed the grossest names upon my sacrificed wife; and while he laughed at her fits and distractions, which he believed to be artifices, he censured Salvini for not returning to enjoy again what he had first, at much expence and trouble, made himself master of.—Fiend! devil!

The repentant Lucilla had yet a faint hope that her mistress would survive. To escape, guarded as she was, she knew to be impossible; but, in order to obtain some small comfort for her Lady, she again attempted to sooth the brute, and again

took him into her arms, even when she wished a dagger in his breast.

Having endeavoured to divert the moody chimeras of Rosolie, which were akin to insanity, and also to teach or bring back some degree of fortitude to a mind that was sometimes depressed by stupidity, and at other times torn by frenzy, she prevailed on Stephano to let them go abroad for a few hours; and three times afterwards had she induced him to accompany them to the church of St. Peter.

It was on their last visit to that place that Rosolie discovered me;—I was observed by neither Lucilla nor Stephano; and as my wife did not speak till after she was carried home, and left to the care of her distressed companion, the hell-hound of Salvini knew nothing of the discovery, nor in any wise troubled

troubled himself concerning the fainting of his prisoner.

Rosolie knew she was not deceiving herself in respect to my appearance, the reality of which was not doubted by her; it created a fixed and frightful horror, and she spoke of it to Lucilla with a solemnity so dreadful, and with such a motionless countenance, that the girl was terrified by looking upon and hearing her. Rosolie requested her to write the note which had first excited my wonder, and, if possible, to convey it to me; but Lucilla was conscious of the difficulty of performing the task, even admitting that I was in Rome, and she knew that it must be attempted by stratagem, in which there would be considerable peril.

The chamber in which they resided, or rather in which they were confined, was

the back of the house, and the window belonging to it near the premises of another person; in the adjoining yard they had daily seen a woman walking, and as she appeared too humble to be the owner of the house, Lucilla concluded that she was only put in the possession of it during the absence of her employers. The eyes of this person had often met those of the prisoners, who, through fear, had never spoken to her; and Lucilla, struck by the peculiar, inquisitive, and apparently anxious manner of her regard, thought it possible that she would be inclined to serve them, if they were, in proper terms, to require her assistance. She therefore wrote a short note to her, entreating, in an affecting manner, that she would enquire at the hotels and other places where it was likely to obtain intelligence whether Signor

Roncorone

Roncorone were at Rome, and if he were, in what part of the city he resided.

She informed the woman that this request came from victims of cruelty and oppression, but earnestly begged her to observe secrecy, and not to speak to the Signor if she should discover him. Inclosing a piece of money, she waited anxiously for the appearance of the stranger, on whose approach she threw it over the wall, and trembled while the receiver was taking it from the ground. The woman unfolded the paper, perused it earnestly, looked compassionately at the supplicating and agitated prisoners, and, by her gestures, led them to suppose that she would willingly endeavour to befriend them.

Lucilla felt a degree of comfort, and talked of their deliverance by me; the horror of Rosalie, however, increased, and she solemnly vowed never to see me more;

but she feared that I might be discovered, and murdered either by Salvini or Stephano. This idea now principally occupied her mind; in consequence of which, her words were wild and extravagant, and she was terrified by the most trifling noise.

Lucilla, whom her mistress, in her most composed moments, had forgiven, having prevailed on her to lie down, went to play the hypocrite before Stephano, in order that she might induce him to abate his severity. Knowing his avarice to be great, she carried with her a diamond cross of considerable value, which she persuaded him she had purloined from her mistress, who, she added, significantly, could have no further occasion for it.

Stephano received it with pleasure; he saw not through the artifice of Lucilla, but caressed her repeatedly; at the same time he commended her change of sentiments,
vowed

vowed to discard the wanton he had taken into the house, informed her that he expected Salvini in Rome in the course of a fortnight, when he hoped circumstances would become more favourable in the eyes of his Lady, whose unhappiness he conceived to be self-imposed; and again, as he had many times before, solemnly swore that his late master had long become insensible of the departure of his wife, he having died in Venice of a fever, supposed to be brought upon him by his attendance on Signor Alberti.

Lucilla did not dare either to contradict or oppose the despicable liar, well knowing the rashness and ferocity of his temper; on the contrary, she seemed to accord to all he said, but hinted that she thought the health of her mistress was very bad. She proceeded to tell him that medical assistance was absolutely necessary, and requested him to let

her go out on the following day to purchase some medicines, which, she added, might be administered by her without the intrusion of a physician.

This, however, Stephano hastily refused, dropping at the same time some doubts respecting her sincerity; when assuming an air of assurance, she replied, if she were suspected, she should regard her own interest only, and snatching up the diamonds which she had placed upon a table, was preparing to leave the room; but Stephano detained her, and fawningly drawing her towards him, begged her not to be so warm and impetuous. Lucilla now, for the first time, saw her power, and endeavoured to increase it; what humanity could not accomplish, she found the gift of any thing that was valuable would be fully adequate to; and also that pride and courage aided her project better than fear and abjectness, which

which she, on the instant, resolved to put aside, and to talk to him with the spirit of an offended and irritated woman.

It was with satisfaction that she perceived this conduct on her part was likely to produce the consequences she had wished for. Stephano's penetration was considerably less than his villany; he believed that the girl was actually now as depraved as he had been long endeavouring to make her; he promised her she should go out on the following day as she had desired; and urged her to take more valuables from the casket of her mistress, which had been snatched up by her when she found her house on fire, and afterwards brought to Rome, and forgotten. Lucilla promised to do this whenever a favourable opportunity should present itself, but warned him at no time thereafter to place his doubts and suspicions on her.

She

She then returned to the chamber of Rosolie, who had fallen into an uneasy sleep, in which, however, she continued some considerable time. At length she started from a terrifying dream; but Lucilla called her to a sense of her situation, and leading her to the window, they both sat down, and soon after saw their unknown friend in the adjoining garden, holding up a folded paper.

Rosolie instantly fell back in her chair, and Lucilla screamed as she threw up the sash. The woman had put the note on the end of a long osier, and mounting a garden ladder, she extended her arm, and Lucilla received the billet. This being performed, the stranger kissed her hand, and retired, and Lucilla unfolded the little packet, which was formed of the money that had accompanied her written entreaties, and of a paper which

which informed them that, after a long enquiry, she had discovered Signor Roncorone, as well as a gentleman, his friend, of the name of Alberti, was living in Rome. She particularly described the place in which they resided, but declined all pecuniary acknowledgment, and assured them that if she had the ability of doing them any further service, and they could contrive to make their wants known, inclination would not be wanting in her.

My poor Rosolie was troubled with hysterical emotions while she listened to Lucilla, who informed her of her project of delivering, if possible, the note to me on the following day. The girl entreated her mistress to let her make a full disclosure of circumstances; but seeing the dreadful effects of her proposal, she forbore to speak of it again.

The

The next day Lucilla availed herself of Stephano's promise; and having bought a few drugs of a chemist, she enquired her way to the house occupied by me and my friend, when, following her directions, she met me in the street, and pursuing me to my home, delivered the billet as I have mentioned before.

Stephano was a great epicure: Lucilla, knowing this to be his character, made some purchases for his palate; and laying them before him on her return, again won his regard, and caused him to renew his former protestations, to which she seemed to listen with approbation.

Her mistress, who was waiting with impatience, heard her information with terror; and before the approach of night, her illness had increased most alarmingly. She was continually repeating an anxious wish
that

that I would leave Rome; her next desire was to die; and the consciousness of the rapid decay of her faculties formed the most soothing of her reflections. She persuaded Lucilla to conceal her extreme indisposition from the fiend Stephano, whose very name was dreadful to her, and whose sight she could not for the space of a moment endure; and also to deliver a second note to me, if it were practicable, in case I should not have left the city. The questions which she asked the girl respecting me and my appearance were shocking in their consequences; and the account that was given to her of my languor and evident affliction caused her to speak in terms more strange and melancholy than she had ever used before.

With her late accustomed dissimulation, and another valuable having previously
been

been placed in the greedy hand of Stephano, Lucilla accomplished the last-formed project; but her hypocrisy afterwards grew more feeble, and she watched the increasing faintness and frequent distortions of the face of her mistress, who still conjured her to be silent, and to let death come on her without apprizing Stephano of it;—but after many sick and painful ruminations, and finding that I still remained in Rome, and also that she was most certainly now stepping into eternity, she altered her original intention, and, after many efforts, wrote that horrid note which informed me of her existence and miseries. Still she was determined on concealing herself from my eyes, and would not attend to the solicitations for discovery made by Lucilla, who, though opposed, resolved to place each occurrence within my knowledge;—she dreaded the
event

event of it, but having formed the scheme, rested not till she had carried it into execution.

In this circumstance, however, she unfortunately excited the suspicions of Stephano;—her unusual absence, and her visible agitation on her return, she could no longer hypocritically account for, when, fearing that she had been plotting abroad, he commanded her to retire to her mistress's room, and vowed that she should leave it no more. His brutality, which had for several preceding days been inactive, now seemed to be bursting forth with redoubled violence. Though her rage was internally swelling, she knew that to vent it at this time would be premature; she therefore only requested him to send a medical man to her Lady, who, she believed, was dying, and then withdrew as he had desired her.

Stephano

Stephano looked shrewdly at her as she left him, and stopped her for a moment to gaze earnestly in her face; but he could not much alter her countenance, as her confidence happily revived under his scrutiny, though it totally failed as soon as she turned from him towards the prison-room of her expiring mistress. Stephano, believing that Rosolie was indeed in the state of danger that had been mentioned to him, sent immediately for a physician, whom he brought before my almost insensible wife.

* * * * *

By the language of the Doctor, it was evident that Stephano, in order to cover his villany, and effect his deceit, had persuaded him the patient was mentally deranged. The senses of Rosolie, indeed, were not at that time very perfect, which served to establish this information; and Lucilla had
not,

not, when she looked at the menacing eyes of her betrayer, sufficient courage to attempt to controvert the opinion which had been formed of the intellectual state of her mistress. At length the Doctor and Stephano withdrew; in the evening some medicines were administered to Rosolie, and an old woman was sent as an assistant to Lucilla, who was almost distracted between the anguish which she felt for her dying Lady, and the despair that arose from being deprived of attending me as she had appointed.

Rosolie passed a dreadful night, but in the morning sunk into a slumber. Stephano, who was actually now alarmed, had been many times to make enquiries, which he did with some appearance of concern, if not of remorse; and he did not retire to his bed
til,

till six o'clock, previous to which he had dispatched a messenger to Salvini.

Lucilla, on finding her gaoler asleep, ventured into the lower apartments, which, to her grief and vexation, she found all secured; but, returning to the chamber, she saw the stranger in the adjoining garden, when the hope of escaping again strengthened; and having attracted the notice of the woman, she motioned her to put one of the little ladders over the wall. This was accordingly done, the desire having been perfectly and immediately understood. My Rosolie was still sleeping, apparently to rise no more from her slumbers; the faculties of the fatigued nurse were also dormant, and they seemed not easily to be called into action.

Another moment, and Lucilla thought it would be too late for any enterprise; she therefore

therefore dropped from the window, and descended to the ground with little injury; she immediately mounted to the top of the ladder, and drew it after her into the garden of her unknown friend, whom she most cordially thanked for her humane assistance. Having been conducted to the street, she hastened towards my house, where she rapidly ran through the foregoing story, and begged me to fly with her to my dying wife.

* * * * *

Oh God! what had been my misdeeds, what my crimes, that such miseries, such horrors fell on me? Was it, Father, retribution? No! I have too great a sense of thy goodness, of thy mercy, and of thy supremacy to suppose that thou wert the director of these events, and most unnatural occurrences,—let the schoolmen, in the intricacies

intricacies and mazes of their reasonings, say what they will to the contrary. I have adored thee often in edifices raised by the hands of man, but more often in the temple of the world, which neither art nor industry can limit; which is canopied by thy own Heavens, and which thy own sun by day, and thy mysterious host of stars by night beautify beyond what every mine on earth can furnish, infinitely beyond the poor devices of imitating and presumptuous man! There have I adored thee; there in wonder, in amazement, and delight, have contemplated thy creation, and most truly revered thee. But I had not done this, neither could I thus have borne myself, if I had beheld thee as the scourger of innocence, or as one who, for purposes unrevealed, knew of and suffered the dreadful deeds wrought by the bloody hands of man,

or those which have been done towards me, to the annihilation of health, of peace, of reason—deeds horrible in sound as the most tremendous thunder! more fatal in effect than bursting clouds of burning matter!

* * * * *

I seized the hand of Lucilla, and hurrying her away, desired that she would be swift in conducting me to my wife. The penitent girl obeyed; I rushed wildly through the streets with her, and Alberti followed us. Arrived at the house, Lucilla knocked gently at the door, and it was opened by the hellish Stephano, who fled from me, astonished and shrieking, through the passage; but I pursued him, and seizing him by the throat, grasped him till he foamed, till his face became as black and

ugly as any of the devils, when he reeled insensibly, and fell on the floor.

Assigning him to the care of Alberti, I followed Lucilla to the chamber of my wife; I ran up to the bed, threw myself upon it, saw my Rosolie, pale, senseless, dying! I clasped her hand, but it did not return the pressure; I called her by her name; she neither answered nor noticed me. No! Death was on her—his power operated, and all——

But why this method, Roncorone? why should thy mind strive to assume a fortitude, when there is a perverse power within it, whose cessation from despotism is but of a momentary date—a period, in order to acquire additional strength, which is meant to effect a perfect triumph?

I did not leave the room all the day; I watched the sufferer every moment of the night,

night, and at the break of morning she died—she died!

Salvini, I will bring you to an account for this, and to such an account as shall not admit prevarication. I will anticipate the retribution of Heaven; I will search your heart, but not with words; a confession shall be drawn from you, not by judicial means, but by the force of my own interrogatories. I will do it, villain, barbarian, murderer! by the soul of my wife, whose body lies at this moment stiffening before me, I will do it! In the prolonged agonies of death, when you shall coldly sweat, and writhe, and groan—then, then shall be my triumph! You shall die, Salvini! you shall descend, and the eye of intellect shall follow your foul and reluctant spirit through the noisy vaults and gleaming passages of hell, nor close till you are

pushed from the farthest margin; no, not till it has seen you descending, headlong and scorched, through fathoms of smoke, in which the red flames of the soul-receiving cauldron beneath shall make you partially visible.

This was my oath.—

—I made it whilst I stood over the body of my murdered wife, whilst there was warmth in her still quivering flesh; I made it with a vigour beyond nature, and was carried out of the room by Alberti, who had on that morning caused Stephano to be assigned over to the officers of justice, from whom, however, he escaped, though I suspected it was money, and not cunning, that effected his enlargement.

The state of my mind, as well as of my heart, was too desperate to give an exact and methodical description of. Again my
brain

brain became the receptacle of most foul and tormenting images; and Rosalie, sweet lily early blasted! being laid in the earth, I prepared myself for vengeance.

I provided Lucilla with a sum of money to enable her to return to her friends, if, after her disgrace, they were willing to receive her; but the girl's heart was almost broken, and all the felicities of her life had fled, never to be recalled. Health and peace had forgotten her, and sickness, grief, and contrition were ever near her; but her complaints to them were not many, because conscience was ever telling her that her own guilt had first conjured them up, and solely influenced them in their designs and machinations. Nearly a thousand times, with a deathlike countenance, and with lean imploring hands, did she call on me for forgiveness; there had been error in her con-

duct rather than crime, and her appearance shewed the severity of the punishment that had already been inflicted on her. I therefore trampled her no lower, but raised and pardoned her; telling her to refer her sins, with humility, to the judgment of her God, and also to look for mercy in him.

I then clandestinely quitted Rome; having previously written a letter, similar to the following, to my best worldly friend, from whom I contrived to have it kept till I should be at some considerable distance.

“Forgive me, Alberti, and entreat your wife also to forgive me, for my sudden disappearance. The womb of my mother never harboured you, nor were you in infancy lulled in my cradle; still you have been, and now are my brother. Fraternity
like

like your's was never excelled from the days when the waters of destruction subsided, till the hour in which I said, secretly, 'Farewel, dear partner! God guard your steps, however deviating be mine! Farewel, dear partner! best and most truly loved associate! we shall never meet again!'

We never did meet again.

The disappearance of Stephano made me almost mad; I entreated Alberti, in another paper which I left behind me, to offer immediate and large rewards for his apprehension; but the villain was too successful in his enterprize, and I never more heard of him. My principal fear was that he would be with Salvini, and that from him my intended victim would learn his danger before I could bring it near to him. The idea gave me strength; I hastened towards Venice, and my efforts were so great, that

nature almost sunk beneath them. My body was exhausted, my mind distracted; an hundred times in an hour I called on Rosolie. In the morning I fancied that I saw her coming with blooming cheeks to meet me; at noon she was beside me, smiling on, embracing me; and at evening I beheld her, white and dejected, pacing solemnly under the gloom of every clump or row of trees near which I passed.

So much was I the slave of a wild imagination, and such were my horrors, such my ideas and chimeras till I arrived at Venice. That place was the theatre of action; my sinews were braced, my heart steeled; the hand of desperation seemed to take the guidance of me, and the spirit of my wife to cry from the temples of religion, from the regions of air, and from the waves of the Adriatic, "Vengeance! vengeance!"

In

In going to the house of Salvini, which I did almost as soon as I entered the city, I had to pass the place in which the remains of my uncle rested; the doors of the church being open, I went into it, sought the aisle in which I had erected his monument, and kissed the tablet that recorded some few of his modest virtues. Reverence, however, could not long detain me; I returned through the ranks of those who were devotionally employed; and seeing that I attracted the particular notice of many of them, who rose from their knees to gaze on me, I folded my arms, and laying my agitated face upon them, in that manner passed the doors, and again entered into the street, which being greatly crowded, the concerns of the busy people allowed them no time to trouble themselves, or enquire into mine.

In a few minutes afterwards I was at Salvini's house : I knocked at the door, and a servant appearing, I enquired for his master; but learned from him that my enemy was not at Venice, though the lacquey pretended ignorance as to the place of his residence. From one of Alberti's Venetian friends, however, I learned that Salvini was at Mantua, to which place it was my intention to follow him immediately.

I remained only one day in Venice. Keeping myself as private as possible, I was not noticed by many, and to those few who recognized and addressed me, I did not make known the sorrows of my heart, or the distractions of my mind ; neither did I ask for their pity, nor correct the erroneous information that had been given them of my unhappy story. I no longer looked for sympathy, because I was no longer weak ; I
had

had no tears in my eyes, no sickness in my heart; the active spirits of revenge hurried me on, and the rapidity of my pulses was almost incredible. To speak still more forcibly, my state might be compared to that of a lion, which, having been attacked by an enemy, goes forth with his chest full of ire, and with menacing eyes, to seek for the blood which can alone appease him.

With the same speed that I had travelled from Rome to Venice, I continued my pursuit from the latter place to Mantua; but after my fatigue, my vexations, and my pains, I had to learn that I arrived a day too late for the completion of my purpose, as the execrable Salvini had departed on the preceding one from Mantua.

This was a blow of which at first I was greatly susceptible; for I began to fear that the fiend would elude my vengeance, and

also that Stephano had exceeded me in swiftness, and caused the removal of his employer. Still my disappointment did not wholly discourage me ; but learning nothing of Salvini's departure that was satisfactory, I apprehended that I should not soon meet with him. My strict enquiries brought me intelligence that he had been visiting a Nobleman, whose name I have now forgotten, and that his disappearance was abrupt : all beyond this was mysterious.

Two days afterwards, however, aided by dissimulation, I learned from a servant of Salvini's host, that post-horses had been procured to carry him towards Milan ; and that he had, some few hours previous to the commencement of his journey, received letters which seemed greatly to agitate him.

“ He

"He has not escaped then!" I exclaimed; "my snare is yet open, and I still shall take him in it."—I clapped some money into my director's hand, and in less than an hour was leaving Mantua behind me; the tumult of my heart affected my breath, and on receiving the intelligence of this man, my emotions almost entirely suppressed it.

I paid my drivers liberally, and urged them on with increasing impatience; my soul seemed to fly before me; at every post, not thinking of expences, I selected the best horses, and the night as well as the day were spent in travelling. It was dark when I entered Milan; and in the morning I again began my search, when an hundred additional troubles and perplexities arose; but I surmounted them, dispersed, put them all to flight, completely conquered them.

If

If a man would succeed in a project, let him persevere; if he would gain the assistance of his brethren, let him scatter his gold among them. Those who are urged to do an act of service, for which friendship and gratitude are to be the mere rewards, will shake their heads, and answer, "*We have no power*;" but feed their venality, and it will be, "*Good Signor, command us.*"

I had been a week in Milan, and made no discovery; on the eighth day, however, as I was passing a public market, I saw a man purchasing some poultry, and his face was not unknown to me: I knew him to be, or that he had been, a servant to Salvini. After a moment's recollection, I was assured that he was one of the two fellows that had accompanied my detestable enemy to his house, from which I had rescued my Rosalie

—rescued, only more fatally, more horribly to lose her!

Thinking it probable that I was now on the eve of a full elucidation of circumstances, again my despondency was succeeded by the more violent passions; but I resolved to direct my eyes wholly towards the man, and narrowly to watch his motions. I saw him place the fowls in his basket, and pay the poulterer for them; he then walked away, and, at some distance, and much agitated, I followed him.

On quitting Rome I had, for the forwarding of my project, made some alterations in my usual manner of dressing; and afterwards, when I left Venice, my habit underwent a greater change: and I did not doubt but that it disguised my person, without attaching to it any singularity or appearance of affectation.

I drew

I drew my hat over my eyes, and pursued the object of my suspicion and curiosity, not only through the city, but also three or four miles beyond it. I was cautious in not seeming to notice him, and assumed an air of inattention to things which were around me, by carrying a book in my hand, and frequently looking at it. At length he turned out of the road, and entered a narrow and pleasant lane; I did the same with apparent indifference, and watched him into a small house or cottage that stood in a little adjacent meadow. I was at first prompted to rush forward, and break open the door which he had closed; but caution whispered that such an attempt would be absurd: and in order that I might not excite suspicion, I walked further down the lane, and at some considerable distance saw another small, but somewhat meaner house,

house, where I thought I might venture a few enquiries.

I therefore walked up to it, at the same time hiding my emotions as much as possible, though I felt the flush of passion on my cheek, and knew that I had no direct power of changing or discolouring the growing hues. I took my hat from my head, as if I were seeking refreshment from the air, and proceeded with an appearance of extreme fatigue and lassitude.

A young woman was sitting on a stool at the door, and I asked her for something cooling to refresh me;—she brought me fruit and ice; and after I had taken some of them, and made her a recompence, I started a few simple questions respecting the country, and afterwards others which related, though not particularly, to the inhabitants.

inhabitants of the cottage that I had first noticed.

To the first enquiries she used a great deal of circumlocution, which I could well have dispensed with; and to the last she could say but little. That little, however, roused me, and I drew still nearer to her, in order that my ear might take in every word as it passed from her.

"In that cottage, Signor," she replied, "lives a gentleman, who came to it scarcely more than a week ago."

"Indeed! so lately?"

"A day or two under or over, Signor. To those who love quiet it must be a pleasant place; I hope the stranger will find it such—with all my heart I wish it!"

"What is his name?" I enquired.

"I never heard it: I told you, Signor, that he was a stranger to me."

"Excuse

"Excuse me; I forgot it. Does he live alone? Has he any society?"

"He keeps a servant."

"Can you describe his person?"

"Of the servant, Signor?"

"No, of the master. I have a small curiosity; I think it is probable I shall know him."

"Why, as to describing him—I have seen him only twice, and even at those times not very perfectly; but I think he is a handsome, terrifying man. If ever a woman should love him, I am sure, very sure that she must likewise fear him."

"It is Salvini," I said incautiously, but somewhat indistinctly.

"What did you say?" enquired the girl.

"Nothing—only that your description is whimsical, and makes me laugh."

"I protest

"I protest here comes the stranger now," said the cottager, rising from her stool.

"Where? where?" I exclaimed, while scorpions seemed to spring from my heart.

"Nay, now it is my turn to laugh at you, Signor. There, he is now coming from behind the large tree yonder; when he approaches, pray look at his dark visage and fullen brows."

"Not I," I replied; "I want not to see him."

"Whither is your curiosity gone, Signor?" said the girl, with more mirth than suspicion.

"I had none," I answered; "I was only sporting with you. With your leave I will step into your cottage, and rest myself awhile."

"Do so," she said; "I must, however, have another peep at the stranger; when
he

he is gone by, I will come and dispose my mother's couch for you."

I stepped hastily into the cottage, and putting aside a small part of the window curtain, panting and agitated, watched for the stranger. I saw him at the distance of several yards, and instantly knew him to be Salvini. I looked at the villain's face: it was dark and contracted; and though his eyes fell on the cottager, who was young and blooming, their fires were not softened.

My veins in a moment were swelling, and in the succeeding one my blood was curdled. I was starting forward to pursue and stab him; but my sinews relaxed, my legs failed me, and my head fell with violence upon a table that stood by my side.

The cottager at that instant entered, and looking earnestly at me, enquired whether I was not well; to which I answered that I
believed

believed I had been somewhat incautious in eating so much of her fruit and ice when the temperature of my body was so hot and moist. In order to prevent any ill effects arising, my kind young hostess offered me a cordial, and pressed it upon me with so much kindness and force of recommendation, that I could not decline it.

In a few minutes after I declared myself much recovered, at the same time attributing, as she did, the favourable change to the virtues of the draught she had given me. I did not offer her any reward, but slipped a small purse, without her perceiving it, into the glass which I had used; when putting it aside, I bade my lively little friend adieu, and departed from the cottage.

The free air somewhat revived me; and having walked a little distance, I stopped,
in

in order to think of my plans and means of operation.

What should I do respecting Salvini? Give him up to the law? Was it certain that he would suffer by it? Neither fine nor imprisonment were in a thousandth degree adequate to his villany.—Meet him arm to arm, breast to breast? What, place myself in equal terms before the ravisher of my wife? before her murderer? perhaps to fall the victim of chance, and consequently add to his former brutal triumph? No, no! Should I shoot him, stab him? Yes, yes! To remove such a monster would not be a mere gratification of my revenge and awakened passions; but it would also be to benefit society, and take off a most vile and corruptive blot from human nature, which would look the fairer for the action.

I determined,

I determined, vowed, most solemnly swore that, within the space of a few hours, he should die by my hand—by the hand of the husband of Rosalie.—Angel! I thought I heard your soft voice in the clouds approving my oath; I even looked up for you towards Heaven, but my eyes, having strained themselves in disappointment, only fell on the paths which had been so lately trodden by your destroyer. “Retribution is near, spirit!” I cried—“retribution is at hand! You will hear of it above; it will be rumoured by the shuddering Saints, and I shall soon be with you to announce it!”

I returned to Milan, and purchased at one shop a brace of pistols, some powder, and balls; and at another place I provided myself with a filetto, as I had not fully determined which of the two instruments I should use in the dispatching of my enemy.

enemy. I wished not to be ingeniously sanguinary, though I could not abate him an atom of my vengeance. Putting my new purchases into my pocket, I again left the city, and journeying back to the village, loitered about till some considerable time after sunset.

I afterwards approached the cottage of Salvini; but seeing the servant employed in the little garden, I again retired some distance from the premises, without attracting his notice, or drawing his attention from his work. It was my design to make a deliberate sacrifice, and therefore I wished not to enter into any engagement or contest; on that night I firmly resolved to cleanse Salvini's body of his foul spirit, however hazardous the attempt might be, and whoever witnessed my actions, or had the temerity to oppose them. Fidelity,

perhaps, might bind the servant to the master; but that I considered as no obstacle, even should they not be apart from each other when I rushed forward to seize my prey. The powers of resolution were great within me; the strength of many men seemed at that hour to be at my command; and I had not a doubt but that one of my arms would be able to shoot or to stab Salvini, while the other grasped his menial, and kept him at its full length from me. Had it been possible for them both to have assumed the forms of lions, I should not have feared, in that hour of inspiration, their shaggy paws, or been put to flight by their united roarings.

My mind was firm; I felt not the compunctions of horror; I did not view myself as a designing murderer, neither did I tremble when I cast up my eyes to the realms of
the

the Supreme Spirit, whose ken is said to be illimitable. Never had a malefactor, doomed by the violated laws of his country to expire in public beneath the instruments of torture, committed crimes more atrocious—crimes, which the ear of humanity would turn from, and the soul sicken at !

I again went towards the cottage, and when I was within a few yards of it, saw Salvini and his servant, standing at the door: they had been, and were still conversing together.

“That you can do,” said the former, alluding to something which had preceded—
 “that you can do in the morning when you go to Milan; and I would not have you forget to bring with you the opiates; tell the apothecary to make them more powerful, for his others were weak, and had no effect.”

"Ah, ha!" I cried, or rather strongly thought, "is it so? I have the means to quiet you and your compunctions, and will apply them too."

"And tell him," Salvini continued, "that, during the night, a fever preys strongly on me, and that I wish him to fend—no, tell him to come to me in the course of a day or two. You may desire that he will return with you on the morrow."

"Yes, Signor, I shall be back at noon."

"That is sufficient; open the window of my chamber; I shall walk awhile, and return about eleven."

"What will you take for supper, Signor?" enquired the man.

"Any thing—nothing—I shall not eat to-night."

"Nor

“Nor to-morrow night, nor at any time hereafter,” said I, mentally.

Salvini walked into the garden; I heard him sigh, as if he were much oppressed. He entered a little arbour, but staid in it scarcely a minute; he then plucked a rose from a tree that grew very near the hedge behind which I had concealed myself; he smelt of the flower, gazed on it earnestly, and sighing still more heavily, threw it from him.

He surely at that moment thought of Rosalie, of the blossom that opened and flourished under his eye, the sweet rose which he should have tenderly nourished and fostered, but which he rifled, withered, blasted!

“And blasted be thee, thou false friend, thou cruel guardian, thou most abandoned villain!”

I did not then shoot him; but seeing him pass the gate, I moved from my hiding-place, and followed him at a distance. I felt for my stiletto, which was in my bosom, and placed it in such a manner that an instant might not be lost in drawing it from the scabbard; my pistols were in my pocket, their barrels well filled with powder and balls; every thing was ready for my purpose.

Night never was more beautiful; the scattered lamps of Heaven burnt clear; the hills, the meadows, and the trees were silvered; and the shadow of Salvini fell a great length on the ground, and served me as a guide.—

“ Look around, wretch, and the beauties of nature, perhaps, may give you a momentary pleasure; look up, murderer, and wonder at the magnificence of God! of him,

him, into whose regions you shall never enter; of him, whose eye shall be as lightning to you! Confess yourself, tremble, sue for mercy, that, if forbidden to claim one of the joys of Heaven, you may not be driven into the caverns of hell! Pray, if it avail you nothing, pray! You see the moon shedding a world of light; you shall not see it to-morrow rise over the hills! You hear the bird of night pouring forth its melody, and sending its clear notes through the vales of innocence; some few strains more, and then your ears shall shut out all sound for ever! The spirits of the elements are blowing sweetly in your face; but within an hour they shall pass over your breathless and unconscious body! The gulph of oblivion is yawning, and the sinews of my arm are swelling to hurl you into it!"

He still continued to walk, and I to follow. He had gone nearly a mile from his house, when he entered a small grove, or clump of trees. The moment was come ! I hastened my steps, placed myself before him, and bound my fingers like curves of iron round his arm.

He hastily enquired who I was.

“ Roncorone !” I replied—“ Roncorone !”

“ Oh Heaven !” he exclaimed, and endeavoured, but in vain, to free himself from my violent grasp.

“ Salvini,” I said, “ use no efforts to release yourself ; did you possess treble strength, my arms should still hold you. Struggle not ; I came hither not to be baffled, but to——”

“ To do what ?” said the guilty wretch, faltering and trembling almost to annihilation.

“ To

"To give you a passport to the world which is at present unknown to you; to make a speedy division between your soul and body."

"To kill me! to murder me!"

"To sacrifice you! Such is my intention—such the purpose that brought me hither."

He again attempted to release himself, but I drew forth one of my pistols and placing it near his head, he struggled no more. He however became despicably abject; and, throwing himself on his knees, begged for mercy.

"What!" I exclaimed, "mercy from *me*? mercy from the husband of Rosalie? Villain! that name has roused me. Detested fiend! can you expect mercy from me? Dare you look for it from God? But here, before this instrument levels you, con-

fels yourself; if words will procure you pardon, speak them; however, be brief, for all your faculties will end in the space of ten minutes. Confess——”

“What, what should I confess?”

“That your heart has long been the receptacle of vice; that your past deeds have been horrible enough to doom you to hell; that you are a murderer—a ravisher! Confess, confess!”

“I will not; who can thus arraign me?”

“Were my father living, he could do it; and would not the deceased and mistaken Venzone join his evidence? Stephano, that dark and cruel devil, resembling yourself, could speak to it—Lucilla—my wife, my wife, fiend! all could accuse you. Have I struck you dumb? Speak instantly, or my fury may even spurn at a momentary restraint!”

“Hear

"Hear me," he cried—"hear me, Roncorone! My actions indeed have not been just, but they have been greatly exaggerated. Stephano was a rascal, Lucilla a bawd, and their evidence therefore ought not to convict me. Your wife, had she lived, I should have restored to you."

"Filthy villain! what, stained, deflowered?"

"By whom? Not by me. Roncorone, your ear has been grossly abused by lies."

"And is at this moment. Confess—you set my house on fire?"

"I did. Pardon, pardon me for it!"

"You imposed on my wife with falsehood, seized her, carried her to Rome."

"It is true. I beseech you forgive me!"

"And there you ravished her!"

"Oh, no, no!"

“ You did, monster ! You forced her, compelled her ; you placed a foil on her innocence, marked her with pollution, brought death upon her ! ”

“ No, indeed, indeed—— ”

“ Liar ! hell demands you of me ! ”

I threw him on his back, and having grappled with him for a moment, discharged the contents of one of my pistols into his head. It was not wholly effectual, for he afterwards murmured——“ I am guilty ! I am guilty ! ” when I placed the barrel of the other instrument to his mouth, and scattered his brains.

I threw the pistols from me, and they fell into a pool of water near the spot which was marked with the blood of Salvini ; my stiletto followed them, for I had no more death-deeds to perform. My work accomplished, and my designs effected, I
removed

removed the stains from my hands, and leaving the grove, took the road leading to Milan. I however loitered about the suburbs of the city, and did not enter it till the morning, when I returned to my lodging, apparently tranquil, though internally agitated.

* * * * *

I sat down, alone and undisturbed, to think on what had passed. I did not shrink from my actions; I would not, had I possessed the power, have given Salvini his life again; and when I reflected on his death, I murmured, "Such be the end of every atrocious villain like himself!"

Oh, what ideas followed next! But for him, happiness and bliss had still been mine! but for him, I had been an husband, ever receiving from my soft partner love, tenderness, ecstacy! nay, perhaps, but for
his—

his—Oh God!—but for his violation, I had been a father, listening to the plaints of my babe, or fondly gazing on its little face of smiling innocence! Ah! wretched and most miserable Roncorone!

* * * * *

I left Milan on the following day, and before any rumours had gone forth respecting the transaction in which I had been concerned. My intention was, as it had been before the discovery of my wife at Rome, and when I was bewailing her supposed death, to seclude myself from the world, to seek some spot where the inhabitants were few, and where the malice, cunning, and duplicity of the thicker swarm were not to be traced. I wished to find a place of quiet, where my tired spirit might sink into its long sleep, untainted by loquacity, and unmolested by those effusions which cost
worldly

worldly sensibility only a short breathing, common as the air, but dispensing none of its benefits.

In past visionary moments I had regarded the world as a noble temple, canopied with beautiful architecture, and tenanted by minor Gods! Wherever I then turned, I beheld, or fancied I beheld, Virtue and Charity employed in their deeds of goodness, Mercy stretching forth her hands, and Truth smiling brighter than the sun, which she could look at unblinking; Science receiving reward, Genius unexacted admiration, and Philanthropy—benign Philanthropy! giving smiles to the faces of thousands, pleasure to the hearts of millions! Oh, how beautiful was every thing to the eye! how heavenly every thing to the imagination!

But the optics are only the intelligencers to the soul, to that emporium in which the ingredients

ingredients of our passions, of our affections, and of our antipathies are indiscriminately placed, in order to be modelled by worldly occurrences. The world—that world which once had so charmed and ravished me, now appeared no more than a mortifying spectacle, darkened in some parts by the general frailties of man, in others ensanguined by his crimes, but in none irradiated by his virtues. My former opinions being again considered, were found to arise from infatuation; but I confess when I discovered how far I had gone astray, I sighed at the necessity of retracting. There is something even to regret and mourn for when we are recalled from pleasing deceptions by painful and melancholy truths; we wish almost to be lulled into them again, when the powers that roused us offer no real for the artificial good. Cold Philosophy will spurn at this,

because she teaches that truth is always good, always excellent.

My affairs were few, and easily to be arranged; I posted back to Venice, where, in privacy, I settled them all preparatory to my renunciation of society. I discovered myself only to my agent, who was rewarded for his secrecy; he collected my property, and having reserved a sufficient sum for the poor necessities of my few coming days, or years, as it might be, I assigned the remainder by a writing to my friend Alberti, and charged him only with the guardianship of a young orphan, a little boy, whom I had snatched from the storms of adversity, and the fangs of poverty, and whose innocent tongue used, every time I saw him, to say, "Heaven bless Signor Roncorone!"—"Endeavour to make your charge an honest and worthy man," I said in the paper which
I addressed

I addressed to Alberti; "I hope he will be rising to manhood with promise, and you declining into age with tranquillity, when the planks of my coffin, if any man shall provide me with one, will be rotten, and disjoined by the creatures of the earth. The boy has too many sensibilities—blunt the edges of some of them; stupidity ensures happiness better than excess of feeling."

I appropriated a sum of money for a monument to be erected to the memory of my wife; and in a letter entreated Alberti to attend personally to the performance of this business.

Oh spirit of peace! no epitaph could do thee justice! the sons of Art could never raise a monument so durable as that which was contained in the soul of thy distracted husband. The one must necessarily yield to time and to the sway of years; but the
other

other not prolonged centuries, nor elemental blasts, nor the last great convulsions of nature could throw down, or in any manner efface. God! at that moment I felt thy magnitude; and the expansion of thy power enraptured me while I, trembling, gazed upon thy bright dominions!

It was a pain to part from my little *protégé*; he asked me why I sighed, why my cheeks were so pale, why I had not seen him for so long a time, and where the dear Signora, meaning my wife, then was; and when I kissed him, and told him I was going, he clasped my neck, and sobbed out, "God bless you, Signor! when will you again come back to Ferdinand?"—The boy's words found the chords of my sensibility, and played exquisitely upon them. I fondled him till he fell asleep in my arms, when I laid him gently on a couch, and
kissing

kissing his red lips, gave him a last look, and left him for ever.

After a private residence in Venice of a fortnight, I departed from thence, in order to carry my debilitated body and ruined mind to Switzerland; in which country I meant to dwell as long as local habitation was of any consideration to me. Having formed the design of making a voyage, I embarked at Venice, and afterwards entered the mouth of the Po, it being my intention to go up that river as far as Cremona, for the fatigue of travelling was at that time too great for me.

The beauties of Nature no longer could fascinate or even please my eye; it was dead to them, though the time had been when it would have stretched with enthusiasm. I was not charmed by the undulation of the waves, or by the rich and varied
prospects

prospects on the banks of the river; nor could the evening chantings of the mariners, nor the more lively strains of the peasants, which came from the opposite shores, give me the most transitory sensation of pleasure, or purge my imagination of the foulness that hung over it like a fog. My powers were decaying; the faculties, which solely constitute the riches of life, and without which not even the airs of Heaven seem worth inhaling, were falling languidly and separating in sickness, and I made no effort either to recal or recollect them.

I did not disembark at Cremona, as I had intended, but sailed to Pavia, where I landed, and from whence I designed to depart on the following day.

The next morning, however, I found myself unable to proceed; my indisposition
increased

increased most rapidly, and my giddiness was so great, that even motionless things seemed to move fantastically before my eyes. I thought I was dying; and in that thought there was pleasure, otherwise a considerable degree of satisfaction.—“The moment is nearly come!” I cried; “I am about to associate with angels—to open my eyes on all the grandeur and mysteries of the universal God!”—I smiled in my sickness, and was as unruffled by fear as I had ever been in the calmest hour of infancy.

I was, however, deceived in my expectations; for the time of perpetual silence was not yet at hand. I had not been in Pavia more than six or seven days when the vertigo ceased, and health again strove to effect an establishment.

But my plagues and miseries ended not here; Fate was planning most craftily for me,

me, and preparing a damnable web to catch me in.

I had not been out of my inn since my debarkation, but my host and his family had been very attentive and tender to me, and they expressed much pleasure on my recovery; I felt the kindness of these people—very sensibly felt it, though I could have wished never to hear such congratulations. They were one day speaking of an execution that was to take place at Milan on the next day; and being present, and seeing that the subject created much interest among them, I enquired the nature of the offence, and was told it was that of murder.

“The name of the culprit,” continued my landlord, “is Luzzi; he was in the service of Signor Salvini, whom he murdered some little time ago; for which crime, and

an

an horrid one it was, he is to-morrow to die on the wheel."

"God!"

"Signor?"

"What proofs were there of his guilt?"

"Oh, most convincing proofs! evident, palpable! such as the shallow cunning of the wretch could not shift from the eyes of the world and justice."

"Indeed, indeed! Pray what were they?"

"Why Signor Salvini lived in retirement; he had been but a short time in that part of the country; he was found murdered at some little distance from his dwelling, and many articles of considerable value were afterwards discovered in the boxes of the villain, who had not fled before the alarm was given, and who, on being apprehended, freely acknowledged the theft, but most obstinately denied the murder."

"Oh!"

“Oh! and is there no other evidence against him?”

“No other, Signor;—surely this is sufficient.”

“And he is to die?”

“The rack ends him to-morrow.”

In one moment I felt the pangs of a thousand dying men, and, sinking into a chair, sat some considerable time in a stupor; at length, recollecting myself, I ordered that post-horses might be immediately prepared to take me to Milan.

My agitation, I perceived, astonished my host, who was desirous of asking me some questions concerning the cause of it; but I silenced him, and afterwards sent him to look after the conveyance that I had ordered, and into which, in the course of half an hour, I threw myself, in order to be driven from Pavia. My drivers assured me that I

should be in Milan soon after sunset ; but owing to an injury done to the vehicle, and to the wretched state of the horses, it was near ten o'clock when I reached that city, and I could therefore enter into no part of my business till the morning.

My first enquiry was at what time the execution would take place on the morrow ; and being informed that the criminal would be brought forth at the hour of ten, I retired to my chamber, though my limbs almost refused to perform their accustomed offices.

I dismissed the person who attended me to my sleeping-room, without ordering, or even thinking of any refreshment for myself. I placed the lamp on a table, and threw my hands upon my heated forehead. A large mirror was in the front of me ; my eyes glanced upon it, but I withdrew them in
terror,

terror, as the glass seemed to cast upon me the pale manacled victim, the grim, un-pitying executioners, and all the dreadful apparatus of the limb-tearing wheel. I altered my position, but even then I could not banish the appalling figures of imagination.

My thoughts were growing wild. The danger of the prisoner,—the horror of such a punishment falling on the innocent,—the knowledge of a man's mind, when his situation is desperate, suggesting desperate means of extricating himself,—suicide how often preferred, if the necessary aids are within reach, to a public, prolonged, and excruciating death! These were the subjects, the dreadful subjects which were incessantly shifting in my mind.

The time till the morning seemed almost half a century, and I thought light more

tardy than usual. In the interim, however, I had formed my principal design, which was to rescue the condemned man by a confession of my own guilt, which could alone preserve him, and also to throw myself upon the laws, the severity of which I did not fear, and the mercy of which I resolved not to court.

To preserve so wretched a life as mine, so burthened an existence,—to keep in action senses which stirred not at the call of happiness, and still were never resting, should I, *could* I suffer innocence to writhe under the torture, after hearing the curses of the unfeeling multitude assembled to gape upon the agonies of one of the Almighty's creatures?

He might have a wife; should I send her into the world distracted? He might be a father; God of the universe! should I cause the throats of his babes to scream,
their

their innocent bosoms to heave convulsively, their poor, poor eyes to overflow, and their guileless tongues to say to each other—"Our father is butchered! his veins are emptied, his limbs bruised, broken, and disjointed! let us weep, sisters,—let us mourn, brothers, for our parent is cruelly torn from us forever!"

Had I for a moment harboured such a design, I should have wished that never thereafter the ears of Heaven would be, *even for a moment*, inclined to my supplications.

I was in the streets soon after the hour of seven; there were then nearly three hours to pass before that which had been appointed for the execution, and consequently sufficient time for me to go before an officer of justice, or a magistrate, and to make a confession of those actions which it

was now horrid, inhuman, and even devilish to conceal.

I stopped not to ponder on my designs, but hurried through the streets till I arrived at the house of a magistrate, to whom I had been directed. He was not risen. Anxious to see and speak to him, I entreated a servant (making my request more forcible by the application of a piece of money) to go up to his chamber, and inform him that a person was waiting to make a very important discovery, which, if not immediately attended to, would be productive of the most dreadful consequences that could possibly be conceived.

I believe the man suspected that my intellects were impaired. After looking at me a short time, and putting my present into his pocket, he however went up with my message, and in about ten minutes returned

turned and acquainted me that his master would attend me as soon as he could put on his clothes.

I was well satisfied with the answer, I endeavoured to collect myself against the appearance of the magistrate, and to make my self-accusations with firmness: but my mind recurred to the shocking situation of the condemned prisoner, and my agitation again became violent.

The person for whom I was waiting, now entered the room, and viewing me very attentively, enquired my early business.

"I have a serious charge to make," I replied—"a very serious, and I doubt not but that you will say a very dreadful charge."

"Against whom?"

"Myself—my accusation goes no further; I am come to state my own deeds to you."

“ Then I dare believe your criminality is not great.”

“ Dare *not* believe it ; you are deceived ; it is perhaps of such a nature as will shew me of a devil’s colour to your eyes.”

“ Extraordinary ! proceed, Signor.”

“ There is a man doomed to the wheel this morning.”

“ I know it.”

Doomed for murder.”

“ True ; he is to give his own blood for that which he spilt.”

“ Touch not a limb of him—not a single limb ! let not the hand of the executioner even go near to him. The crime of which he is accused, for which he is condemned to suffer, he is as innocent of as the purest of the saints were of the crucifixion of Christ ! Hear me, attend to me—*he is not*, but *I am* the murderer.”

“ The

"The murderer of Salvini?"

"Yes, of Salvini. These hands, spotless as they now appear, brought death on him, gave him his last passport, and sent him to hell, his fittest residence. But pardon me—I talk rudely."

"Do you talk *truly*, Signor?"

"Do you believe in God? in the Son of the Holy Virgin?"

"Most firmly!" replied the magistrate, raising his cross—"most devoutly!"

"So do I; and as truly as I believe in them, so truly am I the murderer of Salvini. Hasten to the prison, release the culprit, and place me in his dungeon. I heard not of his situation till yesterday; had I been acquainted with his captivity as soon as it commenced, I swear he should not have pined a single day. Be quick, be quick, or it may be too late!"

"It is, I fear, *now* too late ; the confession should, I apprehend, have been made before, if it were really designed to avert the punishment of the supposed criminal."

"Why—why? The hour fixed for his death is that of ten, is it not?"

"It was afterwards altered. He suffers at eight; your self-accusation therefore is undoubtedly too late to save the prisoner."

My blood becoming instantly cold, I shivered as if the different members of my body were parting.

"Murder!" I exclaimed; "follow me to the scaffold! follow me instantly! I shall be damned indeed if Luzzi has suffered! I would not bring death on him to be sovereign of the world!"

I ran out of the house, and though little acquainted with the city, had to make no enquiries respecting the place of death, as

I saw

I saw many people hastening towards it. I was the swiftest of the swift, and it was not long before I arrived at the murderous spot.

The crowd was immense, the dreadful apparatus prepared, the convict partly bound on the wheel, and a tormenting priest stood preaching in the language of damnation, in order to extort a confession of crimes of which the poor wretch was not guilty. I could not get near to the scaffold, but I called out loudly and repeatedly, "Kill not the innocent! kill not the innocent!" when my words or my gestures raised the mirth of the hardened bye-standers; many of whom indulged themselves with bursts of laughter, and with expressions so gross, shocking, and inapplicable, that they irritated and disgusted me.

I removed to some little distance, repeating with more force and exertion the same words; but they had not any greater effect. At that moment I heard a dreadful shriek from the victim, a thousand sobs and murmurs from the spectators. This was too mighty a blow for me; I was growing mad.

“Stop the execution!” I vociferated; “I have a pardon!”

“Pardon! pardon! pardon!” resounded through the crowd. I took advantage of their credulity, and holding up a folded paper, the people joyfully gave way, and made a passage for me to the scaffold. I eagerly mounted the ladder that was placed against it, and threw myself on the wheel; but hearing a deeper groan than any that had before reached me, and seeing blood running on the planks, my eyes shut themselves

selfes up in horror and grief, and my senses were instantly and entirely suspended. Before they again became active, I was removed from the scaffold, and afterwards I found myself in a room surrounded by several persons. The magistrate to whom I had applied, and who had followed me from his house with all possible speed, as I had directed, was among them, and to him I first addressed myself.

My earliest question was concerning the tortured, and my eyes filled with the tears of pleasure and of humanity when I was informed that the sentence, owing to my very strange and unprecedented confession, had no further fallen on him than by breaking one of his arms. That, indeed, was a shocking injury, but I was glad not to hear it aggravated.

On

On being asked whether I still persisted in my recent acknowledgment, I desired a solemn oath to be administered to me; which being done, I again said that I was the murderer of Salvini, and the only person employed in the transaction. I described the spot, the hour, and, recollecting myself, spoke of the water in which I had thrown the pistols and stiletto. If this evidence were not sufficient, I referred them to my host at Milan, who could speak of my absence on that particular night, and also to the cottager, who had seen me near the place of action some few hours before I had shot Salvini.

On being asked the cause of my deeds, for a short time I remained silent; at length, however, I told my examiner that my motives should not be revealed, and that the law should proceed in its regular course on
the

the full and, as I supposed, sufficient confession of my guilt. The people around me looked much surprised, and wondered at my extraordinary conduct; but neither entreaties nor threats could wring the secret from me, or make me speak of the wrongs of my wife. I found it impossible to touch on a theme like that; my soul revolted at it. I was consequently sent to the prison, and lodged in a dungeon, in order to take my trial for the murder of Salvini.

The legal thieves robbed me of all my money; they however allowed me to retain a few papers, which were to them unimportant, and, in spite of their sagacity, I concealed from them a miniature of Rosolie. It was very richly set with diamonds; but to me the most valuable part was the painting, so truly like, so justly resembling my dear, my beloved wife! My heart beat
with

with pleasure when the keeper left my cell without discovering my treasure, which I immediately hid within an aperture of one of the walls in the darkest corner of the prison room.—Trifles sometimes will alleviate the pangs of the wretched, particularly if sensibility has a distinguished claim upon their hearts; and *my heart* was cheered, was solaced by the idea of carrying the picture of my murdered wife in my fond bosom to the scaffold, where the rack would probably crush it with my existence; but I frequently went to the place of its concealment, took it from thence, placed it for a moment in the strongest light which the narrow grate afforded, and casting my eyes upon it for an instant, deposited it again, lest I might be surpris'd, and lose it. Oh memory! thou hast more pains than pleasures, more curses than delights!

* * * * *

The

The man whom I had snatched from the wheel, was likely soon to recover; and though he had acknowledged himself a thief, his punishment was deemed sufficient, and he was therefore discharged. Previous to his leaving the prison, he was admitted into my cell; he instantly knew me, but did not vent a single reproach. I expressed the sorrow that I really felt for having been the cause of his disgrace and sufferings, entreated him to forgive me for it, and assured him that, previous to my death, I would give directions for every possible reparation to be made to him by one of my surviving friends.

I wished for a speedy trial, and was gratified; for after passing a fortnight in my dungeon, I was brought before my judges. As I had directed, the three witnesses whom I had named, were in the court. One of
them

them stated my purchase of the pistols and filetto; another proved my absence from his house during all the night in which the murder was committed; and the last, the female cottager, who now looked on me most expressively, spoke of my being in the village, and repeated the conversation I had held with her in the early part of the day.

Having persisted in concealing my motives for killing Salvini, and solemnly repeated my former confession of my guilt, a sentence similar to that of the former unfortunate culprit was passed upon me.

I rose, and bowed to the man who had pronounced it.

"I hear your decree with calmness," I cried; "I shudder not at it, for death brings to me no terrors, no apprehensions. I have performed my duty in acknowledging the deed; you have done the same in condemning

condemning me for the perpetration of it. I know the eyes of every person around me view me as a monster; I know that those who shall witness my dissolution, will direct to me their scorn, and load me with opprobrium. Let them; still will I indulge the privilege of secrecy;—not one of those curious machines, which are made to give an exquisite sense to torture, shall make me cry out—‘Spare me, and I will confess.’ Regard me not for this declaration as a hardened villain; indeed I am not such, nor have I ever deserved so harsh an appellation; but if my heart were to feel the least repugnance for what my hands have done, those very hands should afterwards be employed in tearing it from my breast. Oh! I *could* tell a tale, that fathers, husbands, mothers, wives, nay, even children would weep at, which would dissolve the most inflexible heart,

heart, and make my censurers pitiers. Oh, so horrid! but my firmness is affected. If there be a hell, Salvini's soul is in the midst of it; and as there is a heaven, I fear not but that I, ere long, shall discover it. Lead me to my dungeon!"

I saw tears, and heard sobbings, and my judges looked mildly on me as I left the court.

Having regained my cell, I became more composed; and by the time that my chain was adjusted, and my door secured, my heart was considerably less agitated.

I had seven days to live; had they been only hours, I should have been happier. Considering my situation, I was not treated inhumanly, nor loaded with superfluous fetters; my gaoler, indeed, used precaution in securing me, but he did not want to weigh my body down with irons. I regarded him

him with no malignity or severity for what he did; on the contrary, I spoke mildly, and sometimes gratefully to him. I did not obstinately reject the food he brought to me, though I was scarcely sensible of the quality or flavour of it; and, at my earnest intercession, he supplied me with materials for writing.

After some reflections, and they indeed were serious ones, I began to write an account of what I had hitherto concealed, which I knew would be soon fully corroborated by my friend Alberti. Had I wished for life, there was a great probability of obtaining a pardon, as the evidence of Alberti and Lucilla would have confirmed my statement of circumstances, and, in a great degree, tended to remove my criminality; but breathing being oppressive to me, and my soul longing for a state of eternal quiet,

I only

I only hoped that my situation would remain unknown to my best worldly friend until my fate was decided on the scaffold. Any interposition on his part would have afflicted me greatly, and his presence would certainly have overpowered me and all my fortitude.

Two days passed away, and no person appeared before me, except the gaoler and the Confessor who attended the condemned of the prison. The kindness of the former I returned with gratitude, as it was truly exemplary; but the latter I dismissed, having first assured him, though not with the tone of rudeness, that I never had entertained a favourable opinion of receiving any benefit in telling to a Priest what I feared, or was disinclined to avow to all my fellows of the earth. This put him to flight; and it was evident that the churl considered me

as

as doomed to perdition, not merely for the crime for which I was manacled, but also for my heresy and disbelief of the powers and virtues of his function.—“Go thy ways, gloomy and dark-browed Monk!” I said, as he went in anger from my cell; “I shall not trust my cause with thee; while I can appeal to God myself, I will employ no other person to do it in my behalf.”

I still continued to write, and the time to pass; four of the seven days had gone over, and preparations were making for the closing one. My narrative, painful as the task was, was carried on regularly till I came to account for the murder of Salvini. There I paused, and fell into a train of reflections which surprised even myself; for they were subversive of all the principles that I had been endeavouring to establish, and of the fortitude that I had been implanting.

I entered

I entered into self-argument. Dying on the wheel had now some weight with me, and I began to lothe the idea of going out of the world amidst curses and execrations; and there appeared something truly horrid in having my lacerated body held forth in a disgusting manner to public view.

These ideas oppressed me, and I found that I had been a boaster and an hypocrite; for, though I feared not death, I shrank from the idea of my marrow being pressed out of my splintered bones. I laid down my pen, and sighed to think that I could not have the privilege of rotting in the earth. Afterwards, however, I endeavoured to banish these weak thoughts; but it was impossible; my stability was shaken, and my fortitude not to be again raised.

Night came on, and I was involved in darkness, the use of a lamp being denied me;

me; the prison was growing silent, and I heard only a faint noise, which I supposed to be occasioned by the rats in the earth. I hoped to recover my strength of resolution before the morning, but could make no immediate progress in it; my food and hard bed were neglected, and I sat on my stone seat till the clock struck twelve.

I was growing faint with my ideas. "Must I, indeed," I exclaimed aloud, "die with torture and ignominy for the extirpation of such a villain?"

"Can you be brave?" said a voice; "if so, live and be at liberty."

Starting, I enquired who it was that thus strangely addressed me.

"A friend who will serve you," was the answer.

"Where? In my dungeon?"

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I

"No,

“ No, a mole beneath it. Be honest, be firm ! Halloo ! your help here. Hush ! the watch ! the watch ! ”

I heard a noise under the floor, but silence succeeded, and I remained in amazement for the space of half an hour, when the invisible again addressed me, and immediately after I saw a faint gleam of light, and also one of the broad stones, with which my dungeon was paved, lifted up by degrees, and at length carefully removed.

A tall man raised himself from the hole, and allowing his lanthorn to give a greater light, he approached me, and smiling, tendered me his hand. Amazement still possessed me, and my eyes were fixed on the face of the stranger, who was a young man, possessing much grace and beauty.

“ You are sentenced to die, Signor ? ” he said.

“ I am within a few days to die, ” I replied.

“ And

“And it is repugnant to you?” he said, smiling. “Well, I allow it is not unnatural.”

“To die by the hands of a common executioner is indeed repugnant to me.”

“Damned be he who attempts to crush you,” he exclaimed; “but this place suits not vehemence. I think, Signor, for I have heard something of your character—I think to the man who is, and wishes to prove himself your friend, that you could be——”

“*A friend.* I could—I swear it!”

“It is enough. Sincerity (I am no fool of compliments) has finely drawn her lines upon your countenance; I will confide in you, and account for my strange appearance. I have been confined in an adjoining cell upwards of seven months; and it was on the condition of breathing the purity of its air for the term of seven years, which

you will allow is a considerable gap in a man's life, that the dogs of Milan restrained their agents from pulling me piecemeal for the amusement of a fight-loving populace.

“ I was accused of having spoken certain words against the Senate, or the Viceroy, or the house of—— But a truce with accusations: Patriots have in all ages bled; even traitors have been known to demand—— ayé, and to *receive* the badge of honour. A niggardly villain, a thief of confidence, put me into the hands of justice, as it is called, and being declared guilty of the imputed charges, sentence was immediately passed on me; and though it was afterwards mitigated, I had, in a filthy prison, to bear the heats of seven summers, the colds of as many winters, to feast on the blood-correcting aliments, and either to walk or to dance,

dance, as my fancy might direct me, within the circle allowed by, and to the music of, my own chains.

“Signor! my buoyant spirits were not to be depressed. In my captivity my heart beat nobly, and I was as great as any of the ephemera, whom I was accused of having slandered; and my mind was not imprisoned, for it wandered from system to system, and dwelt on present and on future prospects. But hark! hush! Did you not hear a noise? No, all is silent.

“My private history,” he continued, “would not much interest you.”

“You are deceived,” I replied; “I should attend to the relation of it with great earnestness.”

“Aye, but the time is unapt. I shall therefore only say that my father was a very eminent chemist:—he had imparted some of

his knowledge to me ; and being allowed to retain a few of his books and manuscripts in prison, the gaining of further information in the art was my principal solace ; and perhaps, at this moment, I am the possessor of such mysteries as the students and practitioners of all Italy are unacquainted with. But more of this in another place.

“ I was soon disgusted with my confinement ; but the prevention of liberty could not, as I said before, affect the vigour of my mind : and though thick walls inclosed, and irons bound me, I meditated an escape. For the first three months no person, except the gaoler, was allowed to enter my dungeon ; but as I behaved with what the men of power called propriety, I was afterwards allowed to throw my arms, and with them my chains, around the necks of such friends as had not forgotten me. You will probably

bably smile when I tell you that my most constant visiter was a woman; not my daughter—I am too young; not my wife—I never was married. It was a woman who lived with and loved me; not by the rules of duty and obedience, but by those of free passions and affections—a woman whose mind and body corresponded intimately with my own. Think me not an egot for the last words that I spoke, if I add to them, she was a noble creature, rivalled by none of ancient—equalled, I believe, by none of modern times—one who could *almost*, (I do not say *wholly*) Signor, with her own hands, lay her heart a sacrifice on the altar of friendship. Brave woman! excellent creature!

“ Pardon me for these flights, and do not think me hyperbolical. She bore me two boys at a birth. Oh! could you but see

the fire of their little eyes, and the early expression of their plastic features! In each of them I behold an epitome of greatness. May the winds of prosperity blow on them in their youth, and Glory become their patronesses when they shall go into the world as men!—as men of strength, of zeal, and of enterprise; not as puppets in fantoccini, nor as Italian macaroni, grinning in pocket mirrors, and acquiring shrill voices at the expence of their manhood.

“ Apollonia cursed the rigour of my judges as much as I did; she was not in the habit of weeping and swooning—a habit which many of her sex adopt in the very moments when resolution is most requisite, and which mere chagrin or petulance will often draw them into; but she felt not the less for my situation, and my chains wounded her as much as myself. By her ingenuity,
however,

however, I was enabled to lighten them; for unbraiding her fine hair one day, she took from under it a couple of small files, with which I made niches in my irons just large enough to pass the links. This was a step towards freedom;—I knew the hours of my gaoler's visits; whenever he came, therefore, he found me apparently confined, and placed in a corresponding attitude; but in his absence I was the free ranger of my realm. I was also as unbroken in my spirit as the rewarded patriot who brought me to my present state, and whose body, should I ever hereafter meet with him, I will, or may I become more despicable than a dog that grubs in alleys!—but whither am I going?—I will damn him, and then return!

“The same dear and friendly hand that had furnished me with the files, supplied me with several other small implements, and

likewise pointed out a place to conceal them in; for she had as many projects as a minister, but they were of a more worthy nature.

“With some difficulty we raised a stone, and to our surprise found a hollow space beneath it; I did not then enter it, but put the covering carefully over it, as I intended to reserve my observations till some fitter season. Apollonia, however, as well as myself, was anxious to know how it terminated, and ardently wished that it might lead me to liberty.

“Having discovered this depository, Apollonia, on the following day, brought me some phosphorus, a small lanthorn, and matches, and the ensuing midnight I descended into the passage, which, to my mortification, I found only of the length of a few feet, and its depth was very inconsiderable.

able. The bubbles of hope burst, and for a few moments I was extremely chagrined; the depression, however, was of no long date, and I laughed over the matter when I again saw my noble-minded associate. Liberty! I still panted for liberty! and in order to obtain it, I entered into an arduous and fatiguing undertaking, which was to divert the course of the passage, and to turn it towards the court that fronted the door of my cell. If I were to be discovered in this attempt, should I not be punished with the utmost severity, removed to a dungeon still more damp and ugly, drag many additional chains, and be deprived of the sight and converse of my faithful Apollonia? I desisted for a moment after thus thinking, But if I were *not* discovered, might I not regain the blissful freedom for which I panted, laugh at the envious dupes of

Milan, make myself as free as the eagle, and range the wide world with my adventurous heroine and my precious little ones. Excellent and invigorating thoughts! I began to work, having previously formed a bolder design; and after labouring, like Hercules, nearly thirty nights, unassisted by necessary implements, I made my way to the yard, which I can now enter by sinking a slight covering of earth.

“And now, Signor, for my grand project, which I have only distantly hinted to you. Dare you make a bold struggle for liberty?”

“I dare. But how to obtain it? the means?”

“By firing this infernal prison, and escaping in the tumult it will occasion.”

“What! endanger the lives of those who are in confinement? of those who hope for pardon? of those to whom it may, even

at

at the moment of your attempt, be actually granted? of those who have wives and little children waiting in tearful expectation at the grate, and perhaps looking for the husband and father while we are plotting their destruction?"

"No, no! my life on it that the gates and doors will be instantly thrown open, and that the emancipation will be general."

"If I thought so, indeed——"

"Assure yourself of it. Your scruples I would remove; yet may I perish if I do not reverence you for your humanity!"

"But how accomplish this? The fire, I apprehend, must be partial and confined; such an one, perhaps, as our gaoler will be able to smother with a blanket, or quench with a single bucket of water."

"There you are deceived; it shall be wide and terrible. I have already told you

that my father was an extraordinary chemist; and I am the possessor of a secret art of conflagration, which nothing could ever tempt me to disclose. I will undertake to make a glorious blaze! What say you? Enterprise or death?"

"Enterprise! enterprise! I feel my heart glowing. To escape the monster that is preparing to gape for me, I will attempt any thing which you may boldly devise—I swear I will, rather than yield myself to his jaws, which never till now looked terrible."

"Bravo! if we do not succeed, we shall both die, but not upon a wheel! I have a dagger, and will use it; here is one for you, too, if you are inclined to apply it. Never stretch—stab rather than stretch! At the hour of twelve to-morrow night the struggle shall begin;—but let me disincumber you of these irons. Would I could
twist

twist them round the necks of some of the Milanese, and with them mount their carcases to gibbets nothing below the regions which the eagles, that might pull from their bones the bloated flesh which covers them, best love to shriek and wheel in !

He began to file my fetters, and in the course of half an hour, owing to his extraordinary dexterity, I found myself unrestrained. I was cautioned by him, however, to affix the links properly in the morning, and also to be prepared for the visit of the gaoler.

“ And now,” said I, “ inform me whether you know any thing of the man whom you appear so willing to befriend? any thing respecting his condemnation—his crimes ?”

“ I have been informed that you are a murderer.”

“ And

“And you still can serve me? still wish to preserve me?”

“I can—I do. When I first heard your accusation—“Let him go to the hell which he ought to burn in!” I exclaimed; “but when your conduct at your trial was represented to me, it pleased me; I pitied your situation, and admired your spirit; and recollecting my former impetuous speech, I not only blamed myself, but also cursed the rashness of my tongue. Afterwards, for I had curiosity to spur me on, I overheard your nightly lamentations, and scraps of a story, which I deemed to be truly lamentable, though I could possibly form no distinct ideas of it. Commiseration grew within me while you were perfectly a stranger to me; but when I looked upon your face, Signor, I could no longer believe that you were literally a murderer, or that you had,
through

through mere savageness, stirred up the hot blood of a human creature with a cold and deliberate hand."

"Look at this picture," I said, taking the miniature of Rosalie from my bosom, and holding it near the lamp.

"Oh, how sweet! how lovely!" he exclaimed; "and whom does it resemble, Signor?"

"My wife; nor is there a line of flattery in it. She was indeed sweet! she was indeed lovely!"

"She *was*! Ah! then she is——"

"Dead! gone from me for ever! I would not speak of her before my judges; but you are a rare and uncommon friend, deserving of all confidence. You know that I killed a man of the name of Salvini; this ruffian defiled the temple of chastity; he bore my wife from me, not seduced, but forcibly deprived

deprived her of her honour! She sickened of grief, and died!"

"I cannot—dare I believe it?"

"By all that's holy and divine it is true! Now, without detailing any more of the horrid circumstance, tell me what the perpetrator of a crime like this deserved?"

"To be murdered cruelly; and, if it were possible, to be restored again to life, afterwards to suffer a thousand, nay, an hundred thousand lingering deaths. But you have chilled my blood. Unhappy man! miserable prisoner! my heart's stream is overflowing for your sufferings! but droop not—sink not at a moment like this. I must not suffer you wholly to unman me. Good night, my new acquaintance and confederate, for I have much business to perform before the morning, in which you can be of no service to me. My name is Pietro

Arpino;

Arpino; and I am your friend, or may the clouds smother me! but if I lead you to liberty, Apollonia will be more entitled to your thanks than myself. Adieu! hold yourself in readiness to-morrow night, when Captivity shall growl for the loss of her victims, and the atmosphere of Milan be illuminated by the red flames bursting from this abominable pest-house."

He shook my hand, and descended.

I replaced the stone with great care, and then sat down in astonishment, almost doubting the reality of what had passed. The enterprise of Arpino I did not think would succeed; but I looked upon the dagger with pleasure, and treasured it as a friend that would snatch me from torture and disgrace.

On the character and principles of my fellow-prisoner I could not at that time think

think deeply; I saw enough of him, however, to excite curiosity and surprise, and he evidently was an extraordinary man. His person shewed a hero, for it was noble and beautiful; the vigour of his mind displayed itself conspicuously, and his firmness and courage I believed to be very great.

The dark hours went over, and on the following day I thought myself a successful hypocrite; for I assumed an habit of melancholy, and not only talked of my execution with dejection, but also, as evening drew on, begged that the Confessor might appear again the next morning, in order to take the burthen off my conscience, which I now found too dreadful and weighty. My commiserating gaoler withdrew. Collecting my papers, I put them in my bosom; and as the night further advanced, took off my chains,

chains, and watched for the appearance of Arpino.

At half past eleven he removed the stone, and giving me a squeeze, and whispering, " Silence," motioned me to follow him through the cavity, which I accordingly did, and almost immediately after found myself in his cell, where his secret apparatus and small instruments were placed.

" I have no time for talking," he said, in a low tone of voice ; " I do not absolutely promise you liberty ; but remember my present. If we succeed, we shall probably never meet again. Apollonia and my boys, my little unfledged eaglets, are removed to some considerable distance from Milan, and I shall strive to join them. Signor, you may want money ; here is a purse for you, roughly, but freely given. The oil of compliments hangs not upon my tongue ; and
having

having been left to the tuition of Nature, the graces of speaking came not within the rules of my education. If you escape these walls, hide yourself in the suburbs till the morning, when you may easily pass the gates of the city; afterwards every thing will depend on your activity. But now to action; remain quiet till my return; if I am intercepted, God bless you!"

He collected his instruments; dipped several small balls of flax into a liquid; and putting his lanthorn under his clothes, disappeared.

I was disturbed by the most violent emotions, and in momentary expectation of seeing Arpino dragged back to his cell. After an absence, however, of nearly half an hour, he returned, and with exultation told me that the building was on fire in three different parts. The noise and confusion

fusion that soon followed, affirmed what he said to be true; the assistants of the prison were running disorderedly about the yard, and the bell announced the circumstance to the city.

Arpino took me by the arm, and soon after brought me into an open space, where the flames met my eye, and made me tremble at their violence and terrifying aspect. The tumult increased, and the noise of the populace, assembled before the prison, was very loud; but we thought it proper to retire a few minutes to our hiding-place till there were more people admitted within the walls. A considerable number was almost immediately after hurrying backward and forward, when we again ventured forth, and joined them, regardless of the probable consequences of our temerity. It was not a fit season to listen to the voice of Caution,
and

and neither of us seemed inclined to attend to her.

I was soon separated from Arpino; and, expecting every moment to be arrested by the gaoler, or some other person, I grasped my dagger firmly; and after a short space of time, being seized with considerable force by the arm, I was applying the point of it to my breast.

“Roncorone! Roncorone!” cried Arpino.

“Is it you?” I said; “is it Arpino?”

“Are you mad?” he exclaimed, still grasping me, “are you mad? Here, take this bucket; follow bravely; imitate my actions, and repeat my words. Instant freedom, or instant death for me! Come on! come on!——“Fire! fire! water! water!”

I kept at his heels, and made the same outcry as he did, in which we were joined
by

by many more voices. We passed the gates!

“It is done! it is accomplished!” cried Arpino; “bold was the attempt, and glorious is its success! God bless you in every after-day! We must part instantly—God bless you!”

He broke from me; but I first grasped his hands, and let a tear of gratitude fall on them. What his fate afterwards was I know not; he however escaped from the city, on which I have grounded good hopes. According to his direction, I did not attempt to leave Milan till the break of day, when I passed the gates of the town, and walked undauntedly on, but still retaining the dagger of Arpino as a security against the power of any pursuers.

I had no means of disguising myself: at the first village I came to I purchased

a horse (for the purse which Arpino had given me was plentifully stored), and mounting him, set off with speed, scarcely stopping an hour at any place till I reached the banks of the Lake of Maggiore, which I crossed, having previously disposed of my brute preserver.

I was happy to learn, by public report, that, though the greater part of the prison had been reduced by the flames, not a single person suffered in the conflagration. The names of Arpino and Roncorone were spoken of with terror; for the discovery of some of my friend's apparatus in his abandoned cell, and also of the passage that communicated to my dungeon, had betrayed to the keeper of the prison the principal actor and agent in this cunningly contrived business.

Large rewards, I heard, were offered for the apprehending of the incendiaries; when,

in order to make greater my security, I procured a disguise, in which I journeyed on with caution, and at length reached the Valais; and, seeking a retired and unfrequented spot, became fearless of the hand of power, and unsuspecting of malice and stratagem.

What had I to do with men and society? Nothing. I had no mind to inform, no wit to charm, no suavity to please. On my own privacy I grounded my security; and callous as the depravity of the world had made my heart, still it would frequently soften at the simplicity and kindness of my untutored fellows.

* * * * *

I have done:—God, whose spirits now whisper in the elements, knows what the sufferings of my soul have been, and what they now are. The total suppression of my

breath will soon be effected, and the miseries of a condemned felon will speedily terminate. I, who once possessed bodily hardiness, am now enervated; sickness accompanies sorrow, and the fierceness of my mind is succeeded by dejection. Oh calamity! I have known enough of thee!

One of the honest natives has been endeavouring to win my favour, and he has succeeded; he wants to alleviate my distresses, to sooth my afflictions, and to make me an inmate of the little dwelling of which he is the master. He desires not to know my story; he sees that I am a creature of misery, and with tears in his eyes—(breeds such sympathy in cities?)—entreats me to live with him, and to enlarge his family of peace. To live! and, living, to be at peace! Ah! friend——

Good

Good son of Nature ! beneficent fellow-man ! before I die, I will bless you a thousand and a thousand times. God protect the woman who sleeps within your arms, and prosper the children that have sucked at her breast ! You have a little vineyard ; may its fruit be tenfold ! Envy not the sons of power, you look calmly on your spots of pasturage ; gentle be the dews that descend on them ! Long and prosperous days, a placid death, and a fair after-name be your reward, mild, charitable, and unoffending stranger !

* * * * *

I became nearly two months ago a resident in the little farm ; but I feel that I am about to leave it for ever. I shall be buried with decency : I have already chosen my resting place ; and the children say that, if

I die, "they will plant pretty flowers around my grave."

I crawled out yesterday, in order that the free air might blow upon me. An unexpected storm arose, but it was succeeded by a lovely calm;—the violence of the one I compared to the struggles of death; the serenity of the other to the state of immortality; and in the craving of my soul I stretched forth my almost fleshless arms to the cloud-enveloped spirit.

Alberti!—dear friend, I die!—Bless you and your wife!—Protect the orphan, and remember those who have, in some degree, soothed the agonies of the dying Roncorone. Take to your notice the friendly little boy whom I have mentioned before, and who saw me yesterday probably for the last time. Rosolie, ere the sun goes behind yon mountain, we shall surely meet. My eyes are
misty

misty—still your form is not imperfect.—

Partner ! wife ! spirit !—Oh !—



Information to the Reader.

Roncorone never renewed his narrative ; two days after this abrupt breaking-off, he purged his mind and body of their afflictions ; and on the fifth subsequent to his death, the latter was given to the earth, under the direction of the humane rustic of the Valais, who afterwards took possession of the papers which the deceased had left behind him. This man, in the course of a few weeks, deposited the writings with a gentleman of Geneva, to whom he also gave the following short account of the unfortunate Venetian, and of his last moments.—

“ His first appearance amongst us excited great curiosity, and in a short time his

general manners and deportment created a considerable degree of terror in some of my neighbours, who distinguished him by the name of the "Mad Man of the Mountain."

He at first took possession of a poor little hut that belonged to a vintager, of whom he purchased the scanty things which were in the house : his residence there, however, was only temporary ; for the greater part of his time was spent in a rude cavern, of which the people of these parts have always been fearful. He was fond of the heights, and seldom came down to our valley, except to procure the few simple necessaries of life ; and even then his words were very few, and also very strange.

" The first time I saw him, I both loved and pitied him. His face was beautiful, his person noble ; and, ah, my God ! when he was not wild, his sighs were so hollow,
and

and his eyes so mournful, that I have often gone home to my family with a very heavy and afflicted heart.

“ I once carried a small basket of fruit to him, and entreated him to accept of it ;— he regarded me with fixed looks, which confused me, asking me at the same time whether I came to betray him ; and then, as if recollecting himself, he took me by the hand, and thanked me for my simple present. I afterwards drew him to my little farm. Sometimes I could not understand his language, and I suspected him to be actually mad, as my neighbours reported him ; but, at other periods, his words delighted my ear, and the soft tones of his voice seemed almost to draw my soul from me.

“ My daughter Lisette and myself were the only persons with whom he would, for
any

any length of time, patiently converse; and unhappy were we when we saw him roving, melancholy and heedless, over the brow of the mountain, or wandering, during a storm, through the lonely paths of the valley.

“ Ah ! how my heart has bled—how the eyes of Lifette have wept for the poor unhappy stranger, who at length seemed wholly to desert our house, and to hide himself from every eye ! At the risk of raising his anger, we ventured to go to him : we found him pale and drooping ; and, Oh God ! the looks of famine were in his face. It was evident that he had long abstained from food. He was weak, thin, and fallow !

“ As I suspected, he was at first displeased, and desired us to retire ; but, endeavouring to make myself known to him, I urged him to go home, and to reside with
me

me and Lifette till health and happiness should again return to him. He answered me with a look which, I must confess, half frightened me, and with a most unseasonable and very unnatural laugh; but he afterwards gave me a refusal, though he accepted of some provision that I had brought with me. About a fortnight after this shocking discovery I succeeded in getting him to my house; but I saw that his life was hastily fading.

“He was now less wild, but more melancholy; though he talked but little with us, his looks were generally kind and tender; and if we attempted to sooth or cheer him, he would water our hands with his bursts of tears. The marriage of my dear Lifette greatly affected him. On receiving the little bridal presents, his agony increased, and on hearing the strains of the flagelet, he

he hastily retired. Poor Lifette was sorry to see so much misery; she went after him, and, bursting into tears, asked whether he did not wish her happiness?—"God send it you till the day of your death!" he exclaimed, "even till the last moment of your existence!"—He took her in his arms, kissed her, and then delivered her to her husband, who had followed her.

"In the evening I prevented him from committing an act of suicide; I arrested his uplifted arm, and in the name of God charged him to desist.—'God!' he repeated, 'God!'—He sunk on his knees, and the weapon with which he had armed himself, fell from his palsied hand.

"His time was but short after this occurrence; these arms supported him in death; these hands closed his eyes! That my heart was grieved is true, but unnecessary to repeat.

repeat. He spoke of a friend, and of his wife—of his murdered wife! He seemed to hold strange dialogues with her, and talked of her as long as he could give motion to his lips. I know no more, and this I have found too sad for a weak old man. Though he be with God, I shall long mourn for him; humanity directed my actions towards the poor stranger, affection gave them force, and his grave must become an old object before it fails to excite sorrow.”

The person to whom the peasant delivered the papers, was a man of understanding and compassion;—his first care was to forward intelligence of Roncorone's death to Alberti; who, on receiving it, hastened to Geneva, where he learned the wretched end of his best beloved friend, and almost brother, of whom he had endeavoured,

during a space of several months, to obtain some information: but the narrative he received, convinced him that there were severer pangs for the heart than any which he had before been aware of.

On his return to Venice he removed many stigmas from the memory of Roncorone, and taught thousands to pity his fate who had hitherto cursed his crimes. Compassion no longer rested on the name of Salvini; infamy was attached to it; and his tomb at Venice, to which place his body had been conveyed from Milan with great funereal pomp, was regarded as the cave of a fiend, rather than as the resting-place of a Saint.

Some of the more rigid Seculars endeavoured to prove Alberti's unfortunate friend a criminal deserving of reprobation; but their malice was impotent, their arguments
inconclusive,

inconclusive, and their churlishness reviled at. Whoever mentioned the name of Roncorone, added, "Peace to his soul! peace to the ashes of his wife!"

F I N I S.



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